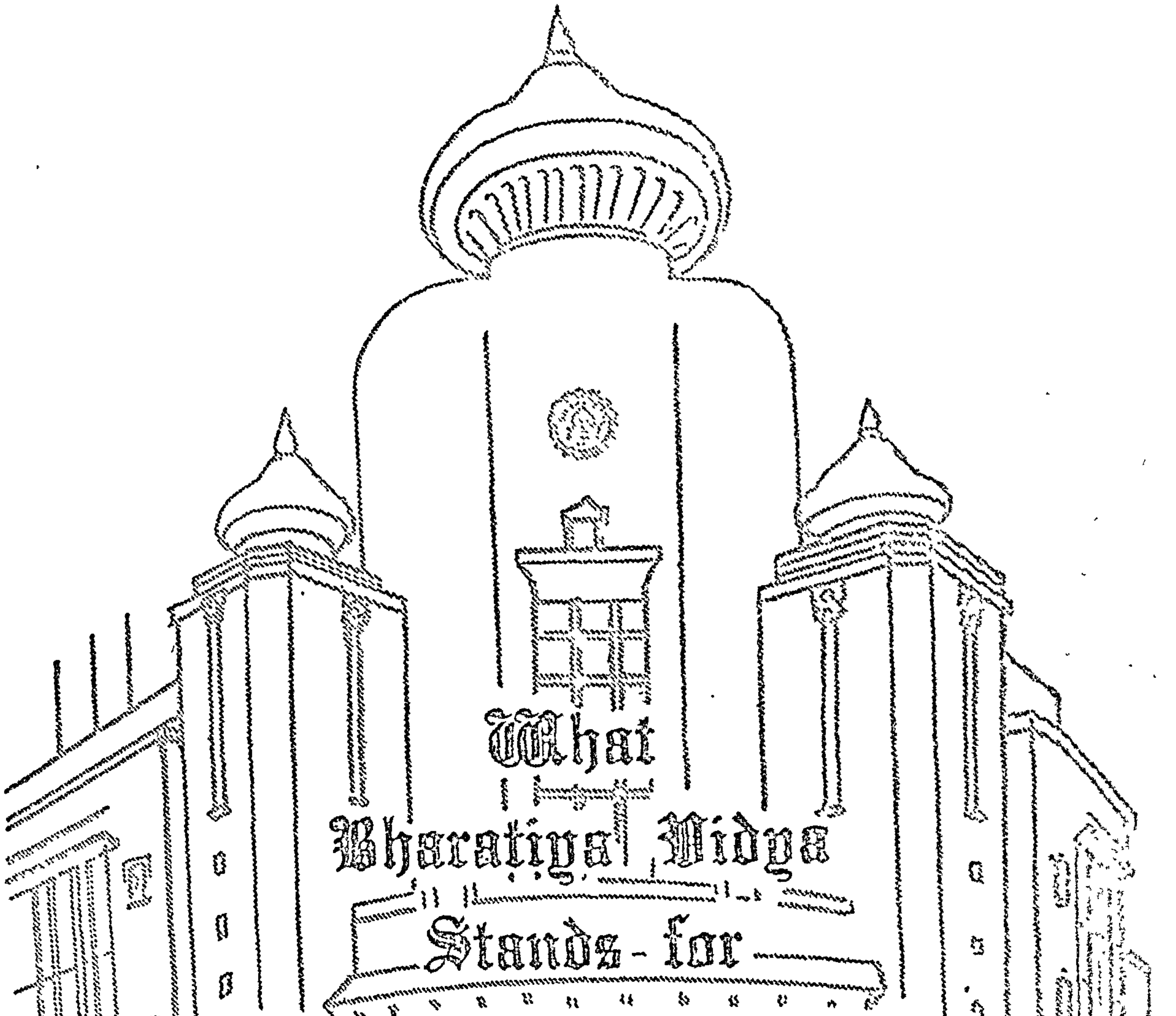


What Bharatiya Vidya Stands for

1. Bharatiya Shiksha must ensure that no promising young Indian of character having faith in Bharata and her culture Bharatiya Vidya should be left without modern educational equipment by reason merely of want of funds.

2. Bharatiya Shiksha must be formative more than informative, and cannot have for its end mere acquisition of knowledge. Its legitimate sphere is not only to develop natural talents but so to shape them as to enable them to absorb and express the permanent values of Bharatiya Vidya.

3. Bharatiya Shiksha must take into account not only the full growth of a student's personality but the totality of his relations and lead him to the highest self-fulfilment of which he is capable.

4. Bharatiya Shiksha must involve at some stage or other an intensive study of Sanskrit or Sanskritic languages and their literature, without excluding, if so desired, the study of other languages and literature, ancient and modern.

5. The re-integration of Bharatiya Vidya, which is the primary object of Bharatiya Shiksha, can only be attained through a study of forces, movements, motives, ideas, forms and art of creative life-energy through which it has expressed itself in different ages as a single continuous process.

6. Bharatiya Shiksha must stimulate the student's power of expression, both written and oral, at every stage in accordance with the highest ideals attained by the great literary masters in the intellectual and moral spheres

7. The technique of Bharatiya Shiksha must involve—

(a) the adoption by the teacher of the *Guru* attitude which consists in taking a personal interest in the student; inspiring and encouraging him to achieve distinction in his studies; entering into his life with a view to form ideals and remove psychological obstacles; and creating in him a spirit of consecration; and

(b) the adoption by the student of the *Shishya* attitude by the development of—

(i) respect for the teacher,

(ii) a spirit of inquiry,

(iii) a spirit of service towards the teacher, the institution, Bharata and Bharatiya Vidya.

8. The ultimate aim of Bharatiya Shiksha is to teach the younger generation to appreciate and live up to the permanent values of Bharatiya Vidya which flowing from the supreme art of creative life-energy as represented by Shri Ramachandra, Shri Krishna, Vyasa, Buddha, and Mahavira have expressed themselves in modern times in the life of Shri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, and Swami Vivekananda, Shri Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi.

9. Bharatiya Shiksha while equipping the student with every kind of scientific and technical training must teach the student, not to sacrifice an ancient form or attitude to an unreasoning passion for change; not to retain a form or attitude which in the light of modern times can be replaced by another form or attitude which is a truer and more effective expression of the spirit of Bharatiya Vidya; and to capture the spirit afresh for each generation to present it to the world.

आ नो भद्राः क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतः ।

Let noble thoughts come to us from every side.

—Rigveda, 1-89.

BHAVAN'S BOOK UNIVERSITY

General Editors
K. M. MUNSHI
R. R. DIWAKAR

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FACETS OF INDIAN CULTURE

BY

R. SRINIVASAN

BHAVAN'S BOOK UNIVERSITY

Organising Committee :

BHAVAN'S BOOK UNIVERSITY

FACETS OF INDIAN CULTURE

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R. SRINIVASAN.

1962

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GENERAL EDITOR'S PREFACE

THE Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan—that Institute of Indian Culture in Bombay—needed a Book University, a series of books which, if read, would serve the purpose of providing higher education. Particular emphasis, however, was to be put on such literature as revealed the deeper impulsions of India. As a first step, it was decided to bring out in English 100 books 50 of which were to be taken in hand almost at once. Each book was to contain from 200 to 250 pages and was to be priced at Rs. 2/-.

It is our intention to publish the books we select, not only in English, but also in the following Indian languages: Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam.

This scheme, involving the publication of 900 volumes, requires ample funds and an all-India organisation. The Bhavan is exerting itself to the utmost to supply them.

The objectives for which the Bhavan stands are the reintegration of Indian culture in the light of modern knowledge and to suit our present-day needs and the resuscitation of its fundamental values in their pristine vigour.

Let me make our goal more explicit:

We seek the dignity of man, which necessarily implies the creation of social conditions that allow him freedom to evolve along the lines of his own temperament and capacities; we seek the harmony of individual efforts and social relations, not in any makeshift way, but within the frame-work of the Moral Order; we seek the creative art of life, by the alchemy of which human limitations are progressively transmuted, so that man may become the instrument of God, and is able to see Him in all and all in Him.

The world, we feel, is too much with us. Nothing would uplift or inspire us so much as the beauty and aspirations which such books can teach.

In this series, therefore, the literature of India, ancient and modern, will be published in a form easily accessible to all. Books from other literatures of the world, if they illustrate the principles we stand for, will also be included.

This common pool of literature, it is hoped, will enable the reader, eastern or western, to understand and appreciate currents of world thought, besides the movements of the Indian mind, which, though they flow through different linguistic channels, have a common urge and aspiration.

Fittingly, the Book University's first venture is the *Mahabharata*, summarised by one of the greatest living Indians, C. Rajagopalachari; the second work is on a section of it, the *Gita*, by H. V. Divatia, an eminent jurist and a student of philosophy. Centuries ago, it was proclaimed of the *Mahabharata*: "What is not in it, is nowhere." After twenty-five centuries, we can use the same words about it. He who does not know it does not know the heights and depths of the soul; he misses the trials and tragedy and the beauty and grandeur of life.

The *Mahabharata* is not a mere epic; it is a romance, telling the tale of heroic men and women and of some who were divine; it is a whole literature in itself, containing a code of life, a philosophy of social and ethical relations, and speculative thought on human problems that is hard to rival; but, above all, it has for its core the *Gita*, which is, as the world is beginning to find out, the noblest of scriptures and the grandest of sagas the climax of which is reached in the wondrous Apocalypse in the Eleventh Canto.

Through such books alone, the harmonies underlying true culture, I am convinced, will one day reconcile the disorders of modern life.

I thank all those who have helped to make this new branch of the Bhavan's activity successful.

Queen Victoria Road,
New Delhi :
October 3, 1951

K. M. MUNSHI

FOREWORD

Professor R. Srinivasan is well-known for his expert knowledge in several branches of Art, Science and Philosophy. Whether he deals with the mathematical and acoustical aspects of music or insists on the cultural importance of musical education or on intuitive originality and improvisation (Kalpana and Manodharma), whether he recounts the history of Natyakala and inveighs against its growing vulgarisation, whether he reviews the rituals and the mysticism attendant on the consecration and maintenance of temples (e.g., his treatment of Ugraprathishta and Saumyaprathishta) or stresses (as he does in his article on Education) that science is curiosity about life, philosophy an attitude towards life, art is a wonder of life and religion is reverence for life (a very favourite thought of mine), Professor Srinivasan is equally interesting and equally thorough.

Dealing with 'Drama as a form of Yoga', he remarks that the function of the dramatist is to give us typical experiences of various types of humanity and that he enlarges thereby the significance of people and events.

One of the most arresting of the papers which he is now collating for publication, is that on the "Nature and Function of Intuition or Vignana". He outlines the significance of the several concepts termed respectively Manas, Buddhi, Gnana and Vignana. He hopes that humanity will develop a new faculty of intuition which will interpret the phenomena of the world in a new way. This, in fact, is exactly what is taking place in the higher reaches of science today and is demonstrated by the recent speculations of physicists and astronomers and remodelling of the older cosmology of the basis of relativity and the newer philosophy revolutionising older ideas of space, time, matter and energy.

As an educationist of long experience, Professor Srinivasan takes care to point out that disciplined freedom is alone the real freedom. And in his paper on "The Gift of Free Will", he dwells on the thesis that man is the creator of his own destiny and his own absolute law-giver. It is from this point of view that he deals with the problem of suffering.

I was specially struck with his note on "Some Languishing Arts" including the puppet drama, the Kolam and the Navaratri Kolu.

With a much-needed candour, the Professor, while indicating the importance of the Katha Kalakshepam, adverts to the danger of the modern Katha becoming, in his own language, a hotch-potch of indifferent music and low class humour.

It is with great pleasure that I welcome the publication of the lectures and memoranda prepared during several years, which Professor Srinivasan is now collecting for the benefit of the public. All that he has written is refreshingly stimulating and often displays real originality.

Ootacamund,
20th July, 1960 C. P. RAMASWAMI AIYER

The writings of Professor R. Srinivasan are all steeped in the spirit of our culture and are mainly concerned with the function of art as a means for the refinement of the human spirit, *atma-samskriti*. The essays on music, drama and intuition are all learned and enlightening.

I am delighted to know that Professor Srinivasan is maintaining his interest in Indian culture and spreading right ideas about it.

—S. RADHAKRISHNAN

PREFACE

The articles, extracts and memoranda contained in this volume are a selection made from out of a number of articles and other pieces contributed to various papers and journals on various occasions. In the circumstances a certain amount of repetition is inevitable. But care has been taken to reduce overlapping to the minimum. The articles will to some extent reveal my three great interests in life—what I call my three "M"s, Music, Mathematics and Mysticism. I have tried to understand the soul of India's Culture through these aspects: Art, Science and Religion in its deepest and most universal sense.

The greatness, the uniqueness, of Indian Outlook lies in the value it sets on higher things, things relating to the soul. It does not however neglect material concerns, it has made headway even in those directions. But it has looked upon material comforts only as means to an end; it has never allowed these concerns to overshadow the higher and the more permanent aspects of a human being.

I cannot adequately express my gratitude to Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer for the exceedingly kind-hearted foreword which he has written. He is a true son of India and is gifted with a big heart. I thank him most warmly for his kindness. My sincere thanks are also due in abundant measure to Sir S. Radhakrishnan, the philosopher-politician who, in the midst of his heavy and unceasing duties, found time to go through my articles and write such kind words of appreciation. He is an apostle of India's Philosophy and Culture; I feel greatly honoured by his warm appreciation. I am very grateful to him.

What shall I say about the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan which has come forward to publish the book? I am tongue-tied.

It is only in keeping with their tradition to stand by and help to keep the old Culture of India undimmed and guard it against unwholesome onslaughts. My heart-felt gratitude goes to them in an unlimited measure.

Madras,
11th September, 1960 R. SRINIVASAN

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DEDICATED TO

The RISHIS of ARYAVARTA,

The Guardians of her Wisdom and Culture.

Part I

MUSIC

1. Music : A Science or an Art ?

Is music a science or an art ? The answer to this question naturally depends on the meanings we give to the words Music, Science and Art. Music is said to be highest of the fine arts and that is true. This implies that music is Art *par excellence*. Does this mean that it is not a Science?

Now, let us consider what we mean by science and by art. In the East the connotations of these words are more comprehensive and overlapping than in the West. The Sanskrit words that correspond to the words science and art are Shastra or Vidya and Kala. According to Hindu conceptions, there are 14 Vidyas and 64 Kalas. I do not wish to go into details in this matter. Suffice it to say, that, generally speaking, *Vidya* is primarily the knowledge of God and by implication it also means branches of knowledge leading to this goal. On the other hand, *Kala* covers almost all other branches of knowledge such as chemistry, biology, archery and the fine arts. It is worth noting that music is included both under *Vidyas* and *Kalas*, as Gandharva Vidya and Sangeet Kala. It may therefore be safely inferred that the Eastern conception of music was that it had two aspects, one spiritual and the other aesthetic. But in the history of the development of music, the latter aspect has been in a way subsidiary to the former. The ultimate function of music was to help the votary towards self-realisation or God-realisation.

A little thought will show that from the Hindu standpoint the demarcation between *Vidya* and *Kala* is somewhat arbitrary, inasmuch as all knowledge must in the ultimate lead to the realisation of the great mystery of God, Man and the Universe. They speak of *Para Vidya* and *Apara Vidya*, but both are *Vidyas* all the same. In almost all

branches of knowledge, we have this duality; the direct and the indirect, the inductive and the deductive, the rational and the intuitional, and so on. Ultimate realisation cannot be only along one path. Science and art in their ultimate phases achieve the same or similar objects but their methods are quite different one from the other, in some respects almost antithetic.

ART IS EMOTIONAL

Science and Art, as understood in the modern days have distinctive connotations which can be compared and contrasted. Science being essentially related to intellect and mind and Art to emotion and intuition, it would look as if they can have nothing in common. In fact, Edward Carpenter goes so far as to say, "As far as a Drama, a Picture or a Poem merely convey intelligence of new thoughts or ideas, they are not Art. To be artistic they must excite emotion. People sometimes ask, what is the meaning of such and such a work? Meaning be hanged!" Science is based on intellectual analysis, while Art is essentially related to emotion and is synthetic in its outlook. Science lays emphasis on definition, but artistic experience escapes definition; in fact it belongs to an aspect of human nature which evades such definition. The field of science is generally objective, but it is subjective experience that is the prime factor in art. Science is impersonal while art is essentially personal with ample scope for improvisation and originality. In the case of science, there may be a purely theoretic side having no bearing on actual phenomena (as for example, the various geometries which are really only logical systems), but in art a theory which has no bearing on practice has no place.

THE SAME GOAL

In spite of these differences they lead to the same Goal. From various observations, the scientist reaches some generalisations and deduces fundamental laws, the artist

leads us from the known to the unknown, the seeming to the being and helps us to get a glimpse of the Great Thought behind the phenomena which are material expressions of that Thought. Great portrait painters paint not only the individual but the type to which he belongs, the type to which several others similar to him belong. Great dramatists generalise the experiences of particular characters and place before us typical experiences. Great poets in a similar way generalise human emotions. Thus the artists enable us to have vicariously as it were, a variety of experiences and benefit by them. This generalising element, this going from the concrete to the abstract, from the objective to the subjective, from the apparent to the real, from variety to unity, is common to both science and art. To put it in other words, both help us to glimpse the mind of God behind the phenomenal world, one through intellect and the other through intuition.

But all the same, science is science and art is art; their methods are different, though one can help the other by giving a balanced background. Music is essentially and undoubtedly an *Art* though it may utilise the methods of science for purposes of codification for the benefit of the rank and file. This is something like the grammar aspect of a language. Grammar can never produce good literature; rather, it may hamper it. Language is more fundamental, it it a living aspect of human intercourse; grammar is only a code, a record of certain standard forms adopted by great literary geniuses. A poet does not care a straw for our grammar, grammar may stifle a poet, and he rebels and breaks through the prisonhouse of grammar into spacious realms of poetic fantasies, untrammelled by any conventional fetters.

THE PLACE OF SCIENCE IN MUSIC

It is the same with music. What is called the science of music is only its grammar, even in a more limited sense.

When Bharata named his great treatise on Dance and Music as *Natyasastra*, the *science* of *Natya*, he must have had only some such idea. No number of books, however eminent their authors may be, can give pleasure to your ear or move your heart as a sweet song. A treatise on cookery will not satisfy your tongue or fill your stomach! Art is fundamentally practical; it is the practice of art that gives the aesthetic reaction we associate with art. A treatise, a lecture or an article on Art may satisfy our mind but can never produce emotional reaction, nor lead to aesthetic experience. In dealing with music, we have to keep this constantly in mind.

RULES SHOULD NOT CRIB ART

In the development of musical art it is the *lakshya* that is the soul of the art, and *lakshana* comes in only for purposes of codification. As an art develops, there comes a time when the *lakshana* assumes too much importance and domineers over *lakshya*; that is the period of greatest danger to Art, when form dominates and stifles the life side of art. Art then becomes a formal affair without any inspiration or creative urge. While rules based on the experience of great inspired persons are useful for those who are not so gifted, they should never be allowed to usurp the place of creative work. Rules have a place in art as long as they help the preservation of the basic elements of the art; the moment they become aggressive and interfere with the creative urge of the artist, they must be curbed and relegated to their proper place.

The main difficulty with us in India is that we are a bit too intellectual and allow our rational faculty to intrude where it has no place. Music being essentially an art related primarily to human emotions and intutition, an art in which inner feeling and creative urge are of paramount

importance, to make it a field for intellectual analysis and mental delectation is to misunderstand its true function.

LAYA IS SECONDARY

In the case of Karnatic Music, I have noticed of late certain tendencies which indicate the intellectual usurpation of the function of art. The South Indian's make-up especially, is such that he is not satisfied with art discharging its legitimate functions only and giving him pure aesthetic enjoyment and emotional sublimation; he wants also to get some intellectual satisfaction. This is specially noticeable in the great interest evinced by the average South Indian concrt-goer in the *tala* instruments and their manipulations. *Laya* is certainly an important factor in our music; it is said that *shruti* is the mother and *laya* the father of music. This is true; the mother nourishes the child and helps its growth; the father guides the child under loving discipline. The simile is remarkably appropriate. But when *laya* degenerates into arithmetical manipulation without any reference to aesthetic reaction it ceases to be art or even an appendage to art. In special displays on *mridangam, kanjira, ghatam* and other *tala* instruments, complicated arithmetical manipulations (sometimes even challenging the metronome !) accompanied by tympanum-breaking medley of loud sound draw applause from the audience. The inference is obvious !

CORRECT TREATMENT OF SWARAS AND RAGAS

Another noticeable tendency is the undue importance given to *swara* singing. Next to *neraval, swaras* have an aesthetic function to perform. In any item of singing, the *bhava* is the most important thing. It often happens that *kalpana swara* groupings become a mechanical jumble of *swara* without appropriate *bhava*; the form dominates the life. I have often seen young, immature singers who can-

not sing even well-known major ragas like Todi, Kamboji in proper style, indulging in swara-spouting!

So also, in *Ragalapana*, singers elaborate ragas in a mechanical way without any regard to correct *bhava*. Some ragas lend themselves to elaborate *alapana*, while others do not so lend themselves. Even some *melaragas* are only nominal ragas; they have little distinctive individuality or bhava; for example, *melaragas* like Tanarupi, Rupavati, Varunapriya, Yagapriya Salagam, Gavambhodi, Viswambari are only names; even melas like Suryakantam, Bhavapriya, Sulini, in which there are current pieces, cannot be elaborated like, say, *Mohana*, *Kamboji*, *Sahana*, which are *janyaragas*. Every item in a music concert has to be chosen only for its aesthetic merit and not for a display of mathematical permutations and combinations. There is a tendency towards degeneracy in this direction.

The advent of the mike has brought in its train untold possibilities of deterioration in our music. The essential and distinctive features of our music, the delicacy, subtlety, the fine waves and trills which make our music, all these have begun to decay; mere loudness and throaty pyrotechnics are at a premium. Quality is yielding place to quantity, subtle graces are being replaced by loud and broad effects. In short, many of the features which make for the greatness of the art are neglected. I feel that mechanisation, while useful in some spheres of human activity, ought not to be allowed into the realm of art. If this state of affairs continues, the creative artist who really makes and keeps alive true art will go into oblivion. God save us from such a catastrophe!

VENKATAMAKHI'S RAGA SCHEME

One word here about the 72-melakarta scheme of Venkatamakhi will not be out of place. The world of music owes a deep debt of gratitude to him. His intention was

to regularise correct *lakshya* and present a general framework which will be, in one sense, all-inclusive. He never himself believed that all the theoretical ragas possible from that scheme had artistic significance. While he mentioned 72 as a theoretic possibility, he handled only about 20 *mela-ragas.* The book *Ragalakshana* which gives the names and characteristics of these 72 *melas* and which is attributed to him, could not have been written by him at all; evidently it was written by someone later on and added to *Chaturdandiprakashika.* What has actually happened is that later musicians tried to make an Art out of a theoretical scheme or frame work and treat about *ragas* which, though they may be the abstract parents of some *ranjaka janyas,* cannot lay any claim to be artistic entities. Some of these *ragas* may have some theoretic interest, but it is an open question whether they have any artistic claims. I do not for a moment mean that we should confine ourselves only to the 19 and odd melas of old; far from it! I want growth and increasing content in an art output. But the best should always be on the basis of Art and not on mere theoretical considerations. The coat should fit the child, the latter should not be made to conform to a standardised coat. Similarly, when Venkatamakhi spoke of the 12 *swarasthanas* based on 22 shrutis in an octave, he never visualised *swaras* as fixed points. No evaluation of the actual ratios of the vibrations of the various swaras and shrutis was attempted, for the simple reason that the artistic value of a *swara* in a raga did not depend so much on its vibrational value as on how it was handled and what stresses and variations it was subjected to. It is only rarely that a note is used in its pure invariable form. This is responsible for the difficulty one experiences in setting our music to notation in *exact* terms.

To sum up, music is essentially an Art; but it uses the methods of science for its own purposes, never allowing

it to intrude into forbidden regions. Indian music satisfies the heart as well as the mind and goes deeper down into realms where emotion and intellect coalesce into Intuition. Its appeal is primarily to the emotion; but it sublimates these emotions into impersonal experiences where the dualities merge into a great synthesis, where joy and sorrow merge into ineffable bliss.

2. Some Aspects of Musicology

'Musicology' is a word which has come into use quite recently; standard modern dictionaries do not contain this word; it is the Oxford Compendium to music that refers to it and explains its meaning. Considering its recent origin the amount of currency it has gained is remarkable. The word may be taken to cover all knowledge relating to music except actual performance. It has a very wide range and covers topics of great cultural and aesthetic interest. Generally people mean by musicology only the theoretical aspect of music such as the shrutis, mela-scheme, derivation of janya ragas and so on. This is only a minor part of musicology. Let us consider in a general way some of the aspects covered by musicology.

1. *Historical:* As human society evolves its ideas and reactions to outside world also evolve, it gets wider and ever-widening experiences; and so its concepts of right and wrong, beautiful and ugly, justice and injustice also evolve. Of course there are certain fundamental basic truths which are eternal and unchanging. Apart from these our reactions in general to the objective world and our sense of values evolve as our life, our soul evolves. And so music, an effective expression of the soul of a nation, also evolves. The music of to-day is certainly different from what it was in the time of the Ramayana or the Mahabharata; but it has *evolved* out of the ancient basic pattern. Any one interested in the study of human evolution in its various

aspects cannot but be fascinated with a study of the evolution of our musical ideas leading up to the present. A knowledge of this background will help one to handle the present day music in correct form and in right perspective.

2. *Mathematical:* A study of shruti-intervals is greatly helped by mathematics. Also the possibilities of further evolution of our raga system and tala system can be explored with the help of mathematics. Without actually counting one by one we can say how many janya ragas of a given pattern can be derived from a scale. In tala manipulation it is mainly a matter of arithmetic, but aesthetic considerations limit our choice. An elementary knowledge of permutations and combinations will be of benefit in this line of study. Just as a problem worked at a desk by a scientist led to the discovery of the planet Neptune, it is quite possible that some purely mathematical relation may suggest some new possibility in the field of music. Mathematics and music have gone hand in hand in ancient Greece. Plato insisted on a knowledge of music and mathematics on the part of any one who sought admission to his school. Similarly Pythagoras laid down the condition that a would-be pupil should know geometry and music. I frequently refer to the three 'M' s, Music, Mathematics and Mysticism; music and mathematics together lead to true mysticism.

3. *Scientific* (Acoustics): Music is based on sound and a knowledge of sound from a scientific standpoint will be an advantage. For a performance to be completely effective several factors need to be considered and utilised. Voice production (of the kind required for the particular system of music in view) can be done scientifically *more* quickly than otherwise. The concert hall has to satisfy certain conditions if the music performed is to come out at its best.

Especially in dealing with musical instruments and their structure some scientific knowledge comes in handy. A knowledge of the quality of the material used, of the principles underlying *resonance*, of the laws of vibrations of strings and air-columns and such other matters is very valuable. Of course some people deal with instruments in an empirical way, but a scientific approach will save time and ensure correctness.

4. *Geographical:* Some persons may wonder where geography comes in here. But a little thought will explain the point. It is a well-known fact that climatic conditions of a place have a great influence on the voice and the materials used for instruments. It has been observed that in certain areas the voice has a natural tendency to be nasal; the climate at times influences even vocal inflexions. The languages spoken in these areas bear the stamp of this climatic influence. Similarly in some climates the average voice is subdued, soft and mellow while in some other places it is bold, vibrant and forceful. This is an interesting branch of study which it is worthwhile to take up for serious research.

5. *Psychological:* All fine arts directly act on human emotions and music especially has profound influence on our inner nature, feelings and thoughts. This has been recognised at all times. Ragas, or melody moulds, are unique aesthetic entities, each with its characteristic influence and emotional effect. To subdue an angry cobra, to calm a truculent child, to quieten a troubled mind, music is an effective weapon. The vibrations set up by music do not stop with the ear; they induce vibrations in our subtle nature; the entire human nature is affected by them. This aspect has not received much attention. There are many yet unrecognised effects of music whose study will yield wonderful results; a new vista of knowledge will open out, to be put to use for the welfare of human society. The power

of music to cure diseases has been recognised in ancient times. Muhammad Hafid deals in detail with the therapeutics of music and gives hints for the use of certain musical scales for certain diseases.* A Chinese book speaks thus of good music:—"...... under the effect of music, the five social duties are without admixture, the eyes and the ears are clear, the blood and the vital spirits are balanced, habits are reformed, customs are improved, the Empire is in complete peace." Here is a fascinating line of study and research of great practical value.

6. *Pedagogy:* The teaching of music is another interesting branch of musical studies. This subject has received little attention so far. There is no point in bemoaning the passing away of the old *gurukula* system. We cannot bring it back. An intelligent system of musical instruction related to the nature of the musical art on the one hand and the psychology of the learner on the other has to be evolved. Nowadays people who study music are not all out to become professionals; many study the art in the College stage with a view to acquire the power of intelligent appreciation of the art and help its cultural growth. Hence the accent in such cases is on the cultural rather than on the performing side. So the scheme of musical studies has to be planned so as to meet the needs of the various groups of people who come to study music.

Musicology deals with all these aspects and many more.

But all this will not serve any useful purpose unless it helps the art to grow and expand into wider fields and "pastures new". The performing artist is as important for this progress as the musicologist; these two groups must co-operate and work in amity; only then the progress of

*Note:-Vide article on "Doctors now use Musical Therapy"

the art on right lines will be assured. I have often heard people belittle the value of musicology and ask, "Where does all this theory and academic study lead us to? We are concerned with the art as practised. If a person without bothering his head about all this musicology can sing well and correctly will that not do? After all the final aim is to sing or play well." Quite so. In music we have always had the lakshya and the lakshana, and it has been held that lakshya is the more important. But what maintains the correct standards in lakshya is lakshana. For the proper development of music lakshya and lakshana must go together. I know there are some who can sing a raga very well, without any knowledge of swara. We say, he sings from "lakshya". They are popular singers too. But can we call them "musicians"? Certainly not, we may call them singers. Some children learn to sing from hearing gramophone records; some of them have good voice and reproduce the record with remarkable accuracy. Can we on that account say that they know music? Something more than mere skill in singing is needed to make "music" out of "singing". And so our ancients called music a *vidya* as well as a *kala*. Fundamental principles covered by musicology find adequate and proper expression in practical music. One should help the other; to divorce one from the other is the greatest disservice one can do to the Great Muse of Art. Books on music which have come down to us from our forefathers are all books on *lakshana*, are treatises on musicology and not books of songs written in swara-tala notation. We value them because they are *lakshana-granthas*. The lack of co-operation between the musicologist and the performing musician (the professionals) which characterises the present day world of music has led to an undesirable state of affairs. In the words of Mr. K. V. Ramachandran, "Intuition is all but dead and the materials of the art are lying about us in chaotic confusion, not understood and not cared for;

and the art has stopped at the level of the professional executant, with whom the art is a means to an extra-musical end. The executant is like an actor preoccupied with the tricks of manner and inflexions of voice, more than the message of music. Without wishing to decry the human media through which the art has to propagate itself, one may distinguish between the art and its handmaid, between music and the musician who interprets it .... The professional musician is too much in the picture and he has revealed an amazing capacity to throw music itself into the background. We do not engage an actor to expound the drama or literature, but for expound and interpreting music we invariably choose a singer or player, forgetting that there are vast domains of knowledge beyond his ken, with which he is not only not familiar, but which he has never cared to equip himself with. It is just here that the musicologist of the *right kind* could render valuable services." He goes on to say, "One need not be surprised that under the present day conditions our music which was once a hyper-aesthetic poetry, has turned prosy and bids fair to end itself as a debased and impoverished jargon; and all theoretical disagreements of the present just relate to the tweedledum and tweedledee of that jargon." When we think of the dramatic art we think of Kalidasa, Bhavahhuti, Shakespeare, Goethe and so on and not of particular actors who acted the drama and rendered the characters. But in the music of the present day undue accent is laid on the "performing" to the neglect of the inspired art of which the performer is, (in most cases, an inadequate) exponent. Inspired makers and codifiers of music will remain for ever as great figures in the pages of history while popular singers may be forgotten. Music, because its appeal is primarily to human emotions, cannot cut itself away from intellect. It is in the synthesis of Intellect

and Emotion that Intuition, which is above both but includes both, is born.

It is a mistake to think that musicology has nothing to do with practical music. It is just the other way about. It has a direct bearing and exerts a wholesome influence on the practice of music. A performing musicologist will be a great asset Many of the pitfalls into which the ordinary professional sometimes falls would be easily avoided. Several deficiencies which we note in the concerts of the present day would not be there if the singer were a musicologist also. I do not propose to detail all these deficiencies. Let me however just refer to a few noticeable flaws. The primary function of Art is to produce maximum effect with minimum effort. The whole concert will have to be well thought out and planned to serve this end. Frequently we find things happening the other way; with tremendous effort the musician produces poor effect. He must study himself, take note of his limitations and strong points and so blend them as to produce an aesthetic effect. If there is a handicap of the voice he has to use his knowledge of acoustics to produce the right kind of voice (of course, subject to inborn limitations). Each one has some special best; he has to explore and find that line and concentrate upon it and make his special contribution. Improvisation and originality *(Kalpana, Manodharma)* are the very life of our music. A musician should always be on the look-out for discovering some new rendering, some new way of presentation, some new phrasings revealing some hidden beauties in the raga and so on. Even in arranging the programme of a concert the various items have to be chosen with a view to aesthetic effect. I have seen several concerts being flat solely on account of a badly arranged programme. It is not my idea here to give any suggestions on programme-making. Fore-thought is necessary and also some knowledge of human psychology. The performer should feel

en rapport with the audience, sense their raction and use his art to pull them along with him. Of course all this requires a certain degree of culture and musicology just supplies that useful and indispensable element.

3. Democracy and Creative Music

These are days when the taste for music has spread far and wide and people in general hunger for the particular form of enjoyment which music gives. While this is a healthy sign from one stand-point it may not be altogether an unmixed blessing if viewed from a different angle. One of the most effective expressions of the soul of a nation is through her music and when there is a general renaissance in the life of a nation this is evidenced also in her musical expression.

Music (as well as other fine arts) was in the past a privilege of a chosen few; kings, zemindars and rich people patronised music and musicians. The musician had no anxiety about his livelihood. He was free to pursue his art and keep it pure and high, irrespective of the demands of the people. It was, as it were, only by sufferance that the masses had occasion to listen to these masters. But all that has now changed. As with many other things music also has passed on from the hands of the aristocratic few to the general mass. Music Sabhas and other similar organisations have made it possible for the man in the street to enjoy music as much and as heartily as the zemindars or maharajas of old. Musicians are much in demand and one may say their needs in life are assured, at least in most cases.

But — and it is a big "but"— what is the effect of this democratisation on the art of music ? Now the patronage has shifted from the few to the many. The average musician of to-day cannot entirely depend upon the patronage

of the aristocracy. He looks for his support to the people at large, and so has to keep them in good humour. The result is obvious. However intense and sincere the desire of the public for encouraging music may be, the moment the standard of high class music is left entirely to be determined by the mass of hearers, the art is bound to deteriorate. An honest musician, who on the one hand desires to be true to the ideals of traditional Indian Music and on the other wishes to please the hearers has to live a life of compromise between the ideals and the actual necessities of life. After all, one may ask, can the public claim to have the vision and inner equipment, that power of grasping the subtleties of our musical system, necessary to lay down the law for the Vidwans? The answer cannot but be unanimous. There are certain things in life, not of the material of mundane variety, which can only be appreciated from a distance in a general way by the mass; it is given only to a few to get at the inner vital centre of an art system and assimilate and reveal its meaning to the public at large. And so music lovers and those who are interested in keeping our musical system pure and unimpaired owe a duty to meet this problem in the face and find a solution.

Another aspect of the matter which has also to be considered is this. We have plenty of artists, some of them in the top rank. They sing well and to the proper standard and people also appreciate them in a way. But are we having many *creative* artists in the true sense of the word? One of the striking features of our music is that while it is apparently hemmed in on all sides by rules and regulations it is at the same time so elastic, so full of possibilities of improvement, and so remarkably capable of *Mano-dharma* (creative improvisation). To quote Leopold Stokowki, "While giving due consideration to tradition stemming from the past, Indian Music is free and improvised, so that all powers of imagination in the musician are

brought into play. In this way the music of India is always creative, never a mere reproduction of what is written or played". But how many of our professionals can claim to be truly creative in this sense? I am afraid not many. On the other hand some of them, even at the top of the profession, lack the necessary general culture so indispensable to a creative artist. They show a tendency to go along the line of least resistance and condemn all creative attempts as spurious or heterodox. This is a natural tendency, but in the wider interest of the art we have to guard ourselves against it, especially in Southern India where unfortunately few of the professionals at the top happen to possess high cultural attainment and so they convert a plastic and over-growing art into a rigid intellectual system. This danger is a real factor to count. But I believe that the soul of India is not dead, however sluggish her pulse beats may be in certain departments of her cultural expression. She will see to it that her musical art, which is the pride of the world, continues to maintain its position unaffected by any of the onslaughts which are made on many of her cultural expressions.

4. Discipline and Freedom in Music

Some of the deepest truths of life are best expressed only in paradoxes, in apparently contradictory terms. The Ultimate is described as bigger than the biggest and at the same time as smaller than the smallest; some of the attributes given by Science to aether are contradictory.

When we talk of Freedom and Discipline in the same breath it may sound strange. But a little thought will indicate that not only these two are not inconsistent but are complementary to each other. Absolute freedom is an impossibility in the manifested universe. If every one claimed absolute freedom the result will be chaos. Our freedom in the world is conditioned by the freedom of others. Disci-

plined freedom alone will lead to stability and progress. In fact any cultural achievement is the result self-imposed discipline. The more we advance the more these self-imposed disciplines. There lies the essential difference between man and beast. The animal instinctively follows the two great natural urges, self-preservation and race preservation. As life evolves the individual takes himself in hand and minimises the time and attention he was giving to mere physical urges in his savage condition and releases more and more time and energy for higher pursuits. His lower nature is subdued and made subservient to his higher nature. The material side is well disciplined so that his spiritual nature may be more and more revealed. The more the lower nature is disciplined the more the spirit is set free to reveal itself. We may restate it thus: Life expresses itself through form, the more the form subserves the purpose of the Life the greater the freedom of the Life.

This comes out clearly in Music. It is often said about our Karnataka Music that the art suffers from too much of codified rules. This is due to misunderstanding. Of course there are rules and also there is tradition, and these two work in harmony to enable the art to achieve the highest. The most remarkable feature of our Music is that there is almost no limit to improvisation and still the rules would be followed. Let me quote Leopold Stakowski. He says,

> "One of the great characteristics of the Music of India to my mind is its flexibility and freedom. While giving due consideration to traditions stemming from the past, Indian Music is free and improvised so that all powers of imagination in the musician are brought into play. In this way the Music of India is always creative, never a reproduction of what is written or played, as sometimes happens with the Music of Western countries."

Nature is full of charm and beauty, but in what may be called random distribution. It is the privilege of the artist to select from the abundance of nature's gift in beauty of sound, colour, form, and so on and give a new shape which will enhance that beauty a thousand-fold. The artist makes a beautiful park out of the plants and flowers which grow in nature in forests luxuriously without a plan and design. It is the creation of this beauty from raw material supplied by nature that is the true function of the artist. And here comes the value of discipline, orderliness, plan and forethought. Nature is full of pleasing sounds, but the musician selects such of them as can be built into a beautiful garland of sounds. That is Music.

The synthesis of freedom and discipline is best illustrated in Ragalapana. The essential characteristics of the raga are given by tradition in the form of rules, and these bring out its individuality in unmistakable clarity. But it is up to the artist to clothe it in his own way, to decorate it in a gorgeous jewellery or in simple costume, without however mutilating the essential individuality. Let us take a child. It has its individuality. In whatever manner you dress it or bedeck it the child is the same. There is no limit to the variety of ways in which you can ornament it; the exact manner of such an ornamentation is left to the imagination of the designer. Something like this is what happens when artists elaborate ragas in their own way. The more fertile the artist's imagination the more the variety of clothing and decoration in which the raga is trapped. Here is an example of how perfect freedom and discipline can exist side by side and make for richer and grander art. True Freedom is Cultural Freedom which is Disciplined Freedom.

It has been said that, for Indian Music, *Shruti* (correct note-intervals) is the mother and *Laya* (Rhythm) father. There is great truth behind this statement. The mother is

the nourisher of the child, she lavishes all her love on it and perhaps sometimes over-does it with the result that it becomes a spoilt child. The father sees to it that the progress of the child is not marred by the indulgence shown by the mother, he lays down the lines along which healthy progress of the child will be assured. Taking the simile of the park, mother gathers the plants and flowers, the father lays the garden according to plan. These two aspects correspond to the freedom and discipline sides of the art.

Unfortunately at times the value of both these functioning at the same time is lost sight of, over-emphasis is laid on the form side to the detriment of the soul of music, or it may be the other way. But in any case the value of discipline lies in its helping the growth of art. If at any time this discipline misses its true mission and begins to encroach on the realm of the soul of Music, we have to stop it and confine discipline to its proper role. Such critical situations come now and then, and there is some sort of struggle for supremacy between the soul and form of Musical expression. Generally the soul wins and then follows a period of steady progress till again perhaps another such situation comes up. Thus it goes on, and the art progresses, though not always in a straight gradient, but in an undulating series of crests and falls each crest being slightly higher than the preceding crest. Such a progress is made possible only through disciplined freedom. It is this freedom which is so essential for true Culture.

5. Aesthetics of Rhythm or Laya Bhava

It has been said that Laya is the father and Shruti is the mother of music. There is a great truth behind this. While it is true that a mother tends and nourishes a child there is the danger of the child growing undisciplined and the father is supposed to supply this necessary element of

guiding and directing the activities of the child so that maximum effect can be achieved with minimum effort. This discipline makes all the difference not only in Music but in everything in life. The difference between undisciplined music and disciplined music is somewhat of the nature of the difference between a wild forest and a well-kept garden. By proper discipline, pruning and trimming, what otherwise would have been merely a wild growth of nature is converted into a beautiful and attractive garden. This is exactly what Laya (Tala) does in regard to our Music.

I do not know whether in any other system of music in the world the Laya aspect plays such an important part as in Carnatic Music. It looks as if the South Indian mind revels in the intricacies of time measure. This matter has been gone into thoroughly by ancients. We hear of the 7 major talas, then the 35 talas, 175 talas, 108, 120 and so on; all these were developed on the basis of certain definite rules. In addition to all these kinds of time measures, Shri Arunagiri Nathar has, in his famous 'Tirupugazh', introduced new varieties not covered by any of the ancient schemes. Even now, we cannot say that one cannot improvise new kinds and compose pieces in these new varieties—the scope is almost unlimited. Many of these talas have not only an academic interest but are in actual use and people in South India have grown to appreciate and enjoy them at least intellectually, if not entirely aesthetically.

This leads us to the question of the two kinds of appeal in our music, the purely aesthetic and the intellectual. Of course, music being the Queen of the Fine Arts is essentially related to our emotions. The appeal of any Fine Art is primarily to our emotions and only secondarily to our intellect. Our ancient scholars have recognised this speciality of our Music and in classifying knowledge as 'Vidya' and 'Kala' have placed Music under both these categories;

and Music, according to them, was both a Science and an Art in the general sense of the words. Of course, this intellectual appeal of music is not entirely related to the pure rational faculty in us. There is a tinge of emotion about this intellectual appeal. So also for the aesthetic appeal there is some sort of an intellectual background. Emotion in essence is not merely desire but is feeling stabilised by a touch of intellection, and so when we speak of the appeal of Music being essentially emotional there is an implication of also an element of intellectual appeal involved. This is specially true of Carnatic music. The tala aspect referred to above to some extent supplies this intellectual appeal, though it is possible to conceive the possibility of Tala alone being capable of emotional reaction.

Tala is in essence based on measurement of time. So Tala, Laya or Rhythm serves the purposes of regulating, guiding and disciplining Music with a view to enhance the aesthetic appeal. As we know, all the phenomena in the world can ultimately be reduced to vibrations and the effect of vibrations and their power to cause unexpected results have been recognised. By drawing a violin bow across the edge of a glass tumbler in a particular manner, one can break the tumbler into pieces. We might have heard also of the practice of a marching body of soldiers breaking their steps when they cross a bridge. It is known that in certain cases if the periodicity of their steps has a particular value. the tread of the soldiers can break the bridge. We may also in this connection remember our ancient belief that by *Mantras* properly chosen and intoned correctly we can produce wonderful results. Bringing rain by prayer is an example. It is said of the Raga Dipak that it can produce fire and so also the Megha Ranjani Raga can cause rain. So we find in Nature periodicity is of great importance. Here we can see the importance of Rhythm. It is a matter of long experience that a sound regularly repeated tends

one to sleep. A lullaby quietens a restless child, even the rhythmic sound of a moving train lulls some people to slumber.

The effect of Rhythm on our inner nature is not so well recognized as it ought to be. There is as much Laya Bhava as Raga Bhava. By changing Rhythm we can change the aesthetic appeal of a piece of music. Why, even a change of tempo can cause variations in the aesthetic appeal, hence the importance of what is called *Kala Pramana.* The time measure and the tempo have to be chosen to suit the particular piece, its wording, its sense, the Raga in which it is sung, the instrument on which it is played, the quality of the voice that sings and so forth. It is well known that the same piece, which when played on Veena has to be somewhat drawn out, loses its effect on the flute unless the tempo is altered. So also in the case of some human voices the tempo has to be lowered to bring out desired effect. Each singer and instrumentalist has to choose the proper *Kala Pramana* to produce the best aesthetic effect of the piece of music sung or played. This point does not seem to receive the attention which it deserves.

In Dance, this rhythmic aspect is of paramount importance. In the mere grouping of various rhythmic patterns lies the unlimited possibility of producing various kinds of aesthetic appeal. It is well known that a dancer indicates a time measure with his (or her) feet, then he (or she) often changes the pattern and the effect is marvellous. We feel thrilled by the sheer beauty of the change of rhythm pattern; (for example, when the foot is marking the Adi tala with the jati thakadhimi-thari-kita, he suddenly changes the pattern to thakita-thakita-thaka and the effect is remarkable). I am not now referring to the Abhinaya aspect of Dance where facial expressions and Mudras play a prominent part. In the other items of a Dance recital where emphasis is laid upon Rhythm, a study of the

emotional effects of various rhythm patterns and frequent changes of the pattern within a given tala mould is of great importance.

6. Musical Musings

This article is not of the usual type; it may be heterodox and unconventional. It does not propose to put forth any new ideas or suggestions for acceptance; nor does it propose to be the result of any serious high-brow research. Some of my statements may go violently contrary to accepted ideas; they may upset some self-complacent minds. It may startle some into violent opposition also. But then that is the very object of this article. It is meant to provoke thought, to irritate the grey cells of some brains to violent activity. I do not for a moment expect my readers to agree with me. In fact I do not want them to agree with me. I court violent opposition, if that would mean active thought on the part of the opposers.

The first law of Newton is true not only in the physical world of matter but in the mind world also. There is as much mental inertia as physical inertia. Though many may hesitate to acknowledge it, a little observation will indicate that generally our minds run along old grooves. "That is our custom" is an oft quoted excuse for avoiding having to spend mental energy on a new line of thought. "Tradition" is often used as such an excuse also. Of course tradition is very valuable; it ensures and guarantees a continuity of those life impulses which make for the growth of Culture. But when people speak of tradition it generally stands for all kinds of accretions which have gathered round the original life current in course of time, almost stifling it. Mental complacency is the greatest enemy of any true advancement.

In the history of any art it is a matter of common experience that a certain stage is reached when the form

side and the life side compete for supremacy. The impulse generated by inspired great people finds suitable forms of expression and as the impulse gets more and more vitalised it finds newer and richer forms of expression. The expression is the form side and the impulse the life side of the art. Usually the impulse at the beginning is so strong that it controls the form in which it finds expression. In course of time, men who follow the practice of that art slowly lose that living contact with the life impulse which is necessary to keep the form as a perfect expression of the life, with the result that the life side recedes to the background and the form side dominates. Then the struggle begins between life and form, and often the form wins and life is stifled and the art becomes static. In a recent article on "the Mirror of Gesture" Dr. Mulk Raj Anand speaking of the Dance Art says: "As codification always follows the arrival of a static tradition, the grammarian's attempt to record the 'mudras' and 'bhavas' of dance art also seems to show the beginning of the process of decay. For skill in India has always been hereditary and the tradition of creative arts has been kept alive from father to son by mnemonic repetition or memory. The composition of a code or a text was a much later process and probably happened when everything had become customary and the conventions were unalterably fixed". What Dr. Anand says of the dance art is true of every art. The life of art is inspiration, and codification and inspiration are natural enemies.

We often hear of 'lakshya' and 'lakshana' in regard to our music. It has been said times out of number that 'lakshya' is the more important and 'lakshana grandhas' came to be written only when things got settled down to a routine as it were. Lakshana codifies the static condition reached, presumably with the idea that the art has reached a settled and unchanging and unchangeable form. A living art is always in a condition of flux. It can never stagnate.

If it stagnates at all it means absence of inspiration. (I do not for a moment suggest that such grammar books are valueless. Personally I set very high value upon such works; they give us an idea of the peak points reached in the progress of our musical art which moves forward not in drab straight lines but in undulating curves with crests and falls, each succeeding crest being higher than the preceding one.) But the real danger lies in people mistaking the 'lakshana' as superior to 'lakshya' and trying to fit in the ever growing living 'lakshya' to the code and mechanical forms prescribed by 'lakshana'. The living organism can never be crabbed in a shell. If so crabbed either it will die or break the shell.

Let us consider for a moment the Melakarta scheme propounded by the great musicologist Venkatamakhi. His work is monumental and marks an important step in the evolution of the science of music. But what is the net result of that great gift of Venkatamakhi ? He has said over and over again that what he has suggested is mainly a *scheme* indicating possibilities. While he contemplated the theoretical possibility of 72 Melakartas he never for a moment thought that all these could be handled as *ragas*. He himself dealt only with about 19 of these 72 melas. An intellectual scale need not necessarily conform to aesthetic standards. Aesthetics and intellection pertain to two different aspects of the composite human nature. While one may help the other it can never claim to be superior to the other. It is obvious that some of these 72 melas have no aesthetic justification for being called *ragas*. Music has evolved in this country independently of such schemes. These schemes have been more convenient gadgets for purposes of codification. When people say that all these 72 melas can be sung as *ragas* I get amused. A *mela* is not necessarily a *raga*. The former is an item in an intellectual scheme while the latter is a living expression of some of the

deeper expressions of human personality. Even among the melas which are sung nowadays as ragas some have only a sort of arithmetic interest and nothing more. While on the contrary, some of the janya ragas and vakra ragas are charming and move the hearts of anyone who may be sensitive even to a slight extent. Harikambodhi is a mela. Yedukula Kambodhi, Mohana and Kedaragowla are derivatives from it. In the scale of aesthetics how can the mela stand anywhere near these derived ragas ? The ragas are the outcome of inner emotional experiences and they take shape according to those experiences; some of them are simple and straight ; others are a little more complicated ; and still some others are greatly involved. The ragas corresponding to these experiences will also have corresponding outer forms. This is how ragas have evolved and not according to a preconceived intellectual framework.

We know that Maha Vaidhyanatha Iyer composed the famous 'Lakshana Gita' in 72 melakartas. But what about its aesthetic appeal ? Except for the fact that some of our vidwans air some sections of this occasionally, perhaps to impress their superior knowledge, what aesthetic appeal can be claimed by it? Frankly, none. That is why very few people sing it or care to hear it. Human soul is essentially musical. Though it may be surrounded by veils which need to be lifted, we cannot deceive the soul. The unfortunate thing is that instead of looking upon such schemes as convenient scaffoldings we mistake them for life impulses and try to fit in music which has evolved through various aesthetic stages into the schemes. Of course some part of our heritage may fit in. But there is a large mass of our musical stock which could not be fitted into any scheme. In such cases a common mistake committed is to change the shapes of these ragas so that they may be pigeon-holed in the scheme, or call these ragas by such names as 'bashanga' and so on, as if they are renegades and rebels. The remark-

able thing about some of these "rebels" is that they are more musical, more popular and more appealing than the so-called "good boys" who follow the strict letter of the law. Ragas like Ananda Bairavi, Bairavi, Kambodhi, Sahana, Useni, Yedukula Kambodhi, Saveri, which are shining jewels in our musical heritage, are "rebels"! One wonders whether their unique aesthetic charm is not due to their being "rebels"!

When one reads and hears about the possible number of ragas which can be derived from various enunciated schemes one's head reels. We have already seen books which give the arohana and avarohana of a thousand ragas and more. The late Gayakasikamani Muthiah Bagavatar was contemplating a list of 2,400 ragas for this purpose in the proposed second volume of his "Sangeetha Kalpa Druma". Even for the ordinary scales the number 5,184 has been mentioned as a possibility. Mention has also been made of 34,776 possible ragas which take not less than 5 notes (swaras) either way. If we include four-notes scales also the total number might be 1,26,936 without involving any vakra sanchara (involved phrases). All this is mere speculation and not music. As matters stand to-day even some of the ragas prevalent and gaining currency are what have been called "ghost" ragas. Such ragas are only jumbles of swara and have no aesthetic reality about them. The characteristic life of a raga is bhava. Some of the present-day ragas are conspicuous by the absence of any such bhava. Let me quote Mr. K. V. Ramachandran, "Like ghosts we may seem to see them or fancy they exist; but they have no real entity. Of late there has been a mass emigration of ghost ragas into Carnatic music. Ever since the intrusion of pseudo-ragas without musical life or light our musicians have lost the faculty of singing or playing the real ragas .... with the lapse of the art of grand alapa they have lost the musical architecture." In many of our present-day concerts we

rarely hear the alapana of Nattakurinji, Yedukula Kambodhi, Useni, Devagandhari, but even beginners dabble in ragas like Charukesi, Sarasangi, Vagadeeswari, Jothiswaroopini and so on. Further comment is unnecessary. By long usage or otherwise the first set of ragas mentioned above have acquired an unique grandeur, a characteristic charm and an individuality all their own. They do not depend upon mere schemes or swaras. It is the graceful deviations from the actual swara points that make the charm and grandeur and sweetness and delicacy of those ragas. The second set of ragas on the other hand are only swara jargon ; and so it is easier to handle them and produce some noise. No one with any musical sense will dare to do this with the other bhava-ragas.

Let me not be mistaken as being against the advent of any new ragas, simple or involved. As I have mentioned already life impulse is never static ; it ever seeks newer and newer avenues of expression. Among the 72 meals formulated as a possibility by Venkatamakhi, there are of course some which do not lend themselves to be elaborated as ragas. But there may be some which may reveal some unique hidden beauty not recognised so far. I am very much in favour of research in this direction to explore the possibility of giving life and form to some scales which now remain only as scales and have not been evolved into ragas. For example, *Subhapantuvarali* was only a scale so far. Even Sri Tyagaraja, who perhaps handled more melaragas than any other celebrity, is believed to have composed only one or two kritis in this raga. (Even this is doubted by several.) Still this mela is capable of being developed as a raga with its own characteristic bhava. This is sung as a major raga (under the name *Todi*) in North India, and it is a musical feast to hear it expounded by a good North Indian Ustad. Once some friends and I happened to hear it elaborated by Pandit Omkarnath Takhur and we went into ecstatic

raptures. One can never exhaust possibilities of musical expression; as long as life is dynamic there will be room for newer modes of such expression and new melody moulds will be found to express new impulses of life. We should welcome all such expressions as enriching our cultural heritage. But no mechanical scheme or intellectual formula can be expected to do this, because this line of expansion is ultra-rational, super-intellectual and above mechanical formulation.

The place given in modern concerts to swara singing is inexcusable from the aesthetic standpoint. Swara singing is of later growth. In the ancient concerts, I believe, they mostly dealt with raga alapana and what must have corresponded to our modern Pallavi. There were not many Kritis then. It is with the advent of Sri Tyagaraja that Kritis in such large numbers came to be added to the musical repertory of a Vidwan. On account of their innate charm, scintillating brilliance and irresistible appeal these Kritis came to be an integral part of our concerts. But raga alapana and pallavi continued to retain their important place in concerts.

Neraval and swara singing were always integral part of Pallavi in which the sahitya was a small phrase and played only an insignificant part. But of late, neraval and swara singing have come to be almost an indispensable appendage for almost every kriti. The propriety of such an intrusion may well be challenged. There is a definite place set apart for those special features which will bring out the mastery of the artist; why then indulge in it in and out of season? And especially with beginners it seems to have become almost an obsession. The veriest tyros who cannot handle properly even some of the well-known ragas start indulging in swara singing, jumbling up swaras into premeditated tala groupings. The other day the Hon'ble Justice T. L. Venkatarama Ayyar presiding over a lecture

on music by myself made a statement which for a moment startled me; but when I thought over it I found it was profoundly true. He said that with the coming in of swara singing the raga began to decline. How true! The swara singing seems to have become a trick to justify one's wasting time. If one cannot keep an audience interested by giving soulful and appealing music he takes refuge under swara jumbling. Let me again quote Mr. K. V. Ramachandran; "Look at the other mediocrity of that facile verbiage—swara singing—the process of bundling swaras according to set formulae! What is the aesthetic or spiritual value of a mechanical mix-up of rhythm and design? It was Wilde who said that the incompetent could always be correct......... Is the rich sonorous material meant to deliver some pompous trifle? And have we nothing better to express through music's celestial medium than the banalities of an outworn technique?"

Even granting that swara singing and neraval have some aesthetic purpose to serve in some cases, should one indulge in it *ad nauseam*? Some discretion is certainly called for. Certain ragas are best left without this swara drag. This swara singing takes away the beauty of ragas like Nilambari, Punnagavarali, Kuranji. Especially swara singing in higher tempo (second kala) has no place in some of these *vilambakala rakti* ragas.

This leads one to consider the appropriateness of *chittaswara* in compositions. One can understand that when a composition in a rare involved raga is made, a group of swara sancharas (chittaswara) bringing out the special characteristics of the raga tagged on to the piece may be tolerated. Or when a madhyamakala sahitya forms a part of any composition the singing of the swara counterpart of this portion may in some cases be permitted. But a chittaswara for all kinds of compositions needs to be justified. The pity

is that in several of the compositions used in our concerts the Anupallavi and the Pallavi together make a continuous idea, and to introduce a chittaswara at the end of the Anupallavi before going back to the Pallavi in such cases is inexcusable. Take for example, the well-known kriti "yendudaginado" in Todi raga; the sentence is not complete at the end of the anupallavi. Only taken together anupallavi and pallavi make sense. What then is the justification for allowing a chittaswara to butt in between and cut the idea? There are several other pieces of a similar nature where chittaswara is indulged in.

Then a word about singing 'tana'. "Raga, tana, pallavi" has come to be a very common phrase. In the olden times our music seems to have evolved mainly on the basis of veena. The earliest experiments in fixing the swaras in a scale have been made on the veena. Veena seems to have been also an accompaniment for vocal music. The pattern of music was therefore veena-coloured. While vilambakala was the natural feature of the veena madhyamakala played on it came to be called 'tana'. It is an undisputed fact that veena is essentially suited for tana and the effect of tana on veéna is something marvellous. Historically it is quite possible that singers began to imitate on their voice this madhyamakala display on the veena. That was, perhaps, the beginning of *tana* singing in vocal music. But what is the artistic propriety of doing tana on a flute or a clarinet or a nagaswaram or even on the violin? On the violin the rhythmic stressing of the bow has a pleasant effect and this may be taken to correspond to tana. But how does a tana come out on the flute or the nagaswaram? I do not stress the point further. Personally the aesthetic soul in me feels that *tana* must be restricted entirely to the veena. Because our ears have become in a way accustomed to tana on human voice we do not feel the aesthetic misfit. And as I said at the beginning, our mind gets also used to the idea

of vocal tana. I know some friends of mine who are deeply sensitive to music and who like very much our music concerts. speaking violently against this tana business. One friend went even so far as to say that vocal tana looked some sort of parody or mimicry. He evidently represents a type of listener and we can't ignore that type.

And now to that inevitable curse of the modern age, the mike. Evidently it has come to stay. But it has come also to kill all the fine, delicate, subtle, almost spiritual nuances of our music. Let those who want bold strokes and loud sounds have it by all means. But let there be also provision for people who are inclined to hear our music as it is and as it is intended to be, without any distortion through a mechanised gadget. Our music is said to be essentially chamber music. While arguments may be adduced in favour of the mike for big halls and thousands of listeners, there is no altering the fact that real Carnatic music should be heard only in its appropriate setting. The use of the mike in several cases helps to drown the noise made by the audience themselves. I have in my younger days attended music performances where a thousand people have sat and listened and enjoyed for 4 or 5 hours without any mike. If the people who come to listen to music make up their minds to provide the necessary silence to enable the singer to be heard all through the hall, there wouldn't be any need for a mike; but the present-day music hall crowd is almost a noisy mob and the poor musician, alas! has to be pitied. He seeks the aid of a mike to be heard above the din and bustle in the hall. The worst effect of this mike will be that our ear will gradually lose its sensitiveness, its power to understand and appreciate delicacy and subtlety. And what is left of our music if we take away from it the charm, the delicacy, the fineness and the finish so characteristic of it? The success of a music performance depends as much on the listener as on the performer. It is

the responsive audience that draws out the best in the performer. Unless there is a kind of sympathetic understanding between the singer and the listener we cannot expect the performance to serve its high purpose. Music needs a suitable atmosphere and those who believe in the Divine quality and the spiritual purpose of our music should provide the necessary atmosphere in a concert hall so that the art may serve its purpose.

7. Aesthetic Sublimation in Music

The function of true art is to interpret for us the *Divine through His manifestations. An artist, if he be true* to his calling, should in every piece of his work, painting, poetry, sculpture, architecture, music, etc., give us some idea of God-head behind the manifested Universe. He interprets for us God in a way slightly different from that of religion (so called), philosophy, science and so on.

A human being responds to the outer world in a number of ways. The objective world first touches his physical nature. There are also the emotional and mental reactions. Behind these, there is another deeper nature in him which also can be stimulated and made to respond to outer impacts, provided the impacts are of the proper kind. The mere physical contact gives us a sense of comfort or discomfort. The emotional and mental reactions are pleasant or unpleasant. But the response from the still higher aspect of the human nature enables us to rise to a condition of sublimated aesthetic awareness where dualities seem to fade away altogether.

All this is certainly true of music. Through the medium of sound touching our physical tympanum, our emotional, intellectual and spiritual aspects are affected. There is first the physical reaction and certain combinations of sounds produce merely physical reaction and stop there. For example the regular beating of a drum or the rhythmic repetition of some sound as in a lullaby, produces a feeling

of physical ease and lulls the child to sleep. The rhythmic sound of an engine in a train or a steam-boat, the rhythmic sound of the waves breaking on the shore, nay even the the electric fan, is able to produce a soothing physical quiet. But good music does not stop there. It touches our emotions and affects them for good or for bad. Also high class technical music has in addition an intellectual appeal. In the case of one trained for the purpose, it is possible to respond to music purely on the emotional or intellectual level without much regard to the physical response. But true music really goes far deeper than those and touches our very soul and leaves its imprint upon us. Once we have had such an experience, we can never forget it. It may not be possible to explain and describe this reaction in ordinary language. It can only be felt. This is one of those mystic experiences which baffle analytical expression.

Of course, for music to be good, the producing voice should be musical. By 'musical' I do not mean merely sweet. I mean that it should be capable of those modulations which, piercing the physical, emotional and mental veils of the human nature, will be able to produce a tangible effect on the innermost soul. We know by experience that there are several singers who have very pleasing voice, but whose music touches only the outer-most fringes of our nature. Most of the theatrical singers come under this category. Personally, I have not much patience with that music. It is pleasing to hear them and I can stand them at the most for an hour or so. After that it becomes dry, monotonous, life-less and does not evoke any response. On the contrary, there are other musicians whose voices may not be quite so "pleasing," but who are able to command the attention of a discerning audience for hours and hours. I do not hold a brief for bad voice. I am decidedly of opinion that a pleasing voice goes a very long way to accentuate the effect of music, but it is not by itself music. It may be within

the experience of most of us that in the case of a real musician, even in spite of the handicap of a rugged voice, we are able to enjoy and appreciate the music. We forget the mere voice after some time and open our hearts to his *music* which goes deep down into us and produces an aesthetic experience in which the mere physical aspect is almost lost sight of.

I grant that a certain amount of training may be necessary in the initial stages to be able to rise even at the outset above the mere physical aspect and respond in a purely aesthetic way to expert music. But I am decidedly of opinion that this training is within the reach of every one. I only want to sound a note of warning against the tendency on the one hand on the part of some of the lovers and promoters of the musical art to set too much value upon the purely physical pleasure-giving aspect of music, and on the other, to neglect the emotional appeal of music and make it a dry vocal gymnastic feat. One has only to listen to the music of Papanasam Sivan to be able to appreciate fully what I have said above.

The aesthetic sublimation I have referred to, in which the dualities coalesce, must be within the experience of all those who have been moved to tears by a piece of art (drama or music). We speak of tears of joy, but tear is a physical expression of grief; the joy which we experience in tear is not merely the physical or emotional joy. It is *Ananda* which is above the pair of opposites, pleasure and pain, joy and grief. There are certain delicate aspects of music which excite our emotion, often even giving rise to choking, quickening of our heart-beat and so on. But behind these outer expressions of grief, there is a mystic joy (Ananda) in which both joy and grief exist in an idealised synthetic form. It is at revealing this Ananda which can be reached, both by sublimated grief and sublimated joy that every true art must aim. This is really the spiritual aspect of art, to enable us to rise above the pair of opposites

as we see them down here and sense the oneness behind, in which these dualities and multiplicities coalesce. It is on account of the recognition of this function of music (and in fact of all fine arts) that in India Religion and Art have always gone hand in hand; temples have been seats of exquisite productions of art and have patronised various artists. And the artist of yore realised this spiritual mission and dedicated himself to the service of temples, that is to the service of God. As long as we remain true to this ideal and let no spurious or false ideal to insidiously work for the degeneration of this art of arts, our efforts to promote the cause of, and work for the advancement of, the musical art, will be crowned with success.

8. Stories and Anecdotes concerning Indian Music and Musicians

The history of Indian Music is brimming with stories and anecdotes. Why, the very origin of music and other fine arts is in itself a story. The Creator, Brahma, made this universes. He created a variety of wonderfully beautiful and enchanting things; He created the majestic mountain ranges, the thundering water-falls and the giant forest trees, as also the nimble deer, the colourful peacock and the exquisite flowers. He filled His creation with beauty, charm and splendour. But He was sad! His Consort *Saraswati* found Him in that mood and asked Him the reason for it.

Brahma said, "It is true I have created all this wonder and charm and showered beauty everywhere. But what is the use? My children, the human souls, simply pass them by; they do not seem to be sensitive to all the beauty around. All this seems to have been wasted on them; their creation seems to be purposeless!"

Saraswati took the hint and told Him, "Well, let me do my share in the great work. You have created all this beauty and splendour; I shall create in our children the

power to respond to, appreciate and get uplifted by them. I shall give them music and other arts which will draw out of them the capacity which lies deep in them to respond to the majestic splendour and exquisite charm and wondrous beauty of all creation."

So saying, the great Muse gave us the fine arts, in the hope that through the love of music and other fine arts man would understand something of the Divine in His manifestation. A funny story? Yes, but it has a great moral.

One of the basic truths on which all Indian art is developed is that true art is never made to order; it comes as a result of an irresistible inner urge. We hear a song of Tyagaraja and are enthralled; we see a majestic temple tower and gaze on it with wonder; we see some of our ancient sculptures and feel thrilled. Why? Behind all such works of art is a great spiritual urge. The artists who gave them poured their devotion in the shape of such exquisite works of art; it was an act of self-effacing dedication.

charm. What am I beside him whose music is a rhythmic flow of Divine harmony, beauty and charm in sound ? "

"What !" the emperor cried, "is there one who could sing better than you ? Is your master such a great expert ?"

"I am but a pigmy by my master's side," said Tansen.

Akbar was greatly intrigued ; he wanted to hear Hari Das, but, emperor though he be, he could not get Hari Das to his court. So he and Tansen went to the Himalayas where in his own ashrama dwelt the swami. Tansen had already warned Akbar that the swami would not sing except at his own leisure. Several days they stayed at the ashrama ; yet the swami did not sing. Then one day Tansen sang one of the songs taught by the swami and deliberately introduced a false note. It had almost an electric effect on the saint ; his aesthetic nature received a rude shock. He turned to Tansen and rebuked him, saying, "What has happened to you, Tansen, that you, a pupil of mine, should commit such a gross blunder ?"

He then started singing the piece correctly ; the mood came to him and, as it were, enveloped him, and he forgot himself in the music which filled the earth and heaven. Akbar and Tansen forgot themselves in the sheer melody and charm of the music.

It was a unique experience. When the music stopped Akbar turned to Tansen and said, "You say you learnt music from this saint and yet you seem to have missed the living charm of it all. Yours seems to be but chaff beside this soul-stirring music."

"T's true, Sire," said Tansen, "it is only true that my music is wooden and lifeless by the side of the living harmony and melody of the master. But then there is this difference, I sing to the emperor's bidding, but my master sings to no man's bidding but only when the prompting

comes from his innermost self. That makes all the diffe-ence."

Raga is the basis of Indian music; we may say that it is the soul of our musical system. Each *raga* has its own essential, unique, aesthetic quality, called *bhava;* each *raga* has an individuality of its own, it is as it were a unique entity. No one may dare to do anything which will impair a *raga's* uniqueness. Each *raga* is associated with a *devata* presiding deity), which is the enduring principle which gives life and unique structure to the *raga*.

[We may have seen pictorial representations of some of our *ragas,* especially from the Bengal school of painting. Some of them are remarkable and convey the characteristics of the *ragas* they present.]

Coming to recent times a number of anecdotes are told about the musical luminaries. Several miracles are believed to have happened in the lives of the great musical trinity — Thyagaraja, Dixitar and Shyma Sastri. By a song addressed to the Deity at Tiruppati, Thyagaraja had the screen covering the shine drawn back by supernatural means so as to allow him to have *darshan* of the Deity. Similarly through his music he effected a great psychological metamorphosis in the character of some robbers who waylaid him, with the result that those who came to rob remained to pray. Dixitar also is said to have brought rain on a parched land by singing a piece in the raga *Amritavarshani.*

Abnormal powers have been ascribed to music. *Megharanjini* raga is believed to cause rain, *Dipak* to kindle fire, *Nagavarali* to subdue and sway cobras, and so on. Authenticated occurrences are on record in support of these beliefs.

There is an old saying that beasts, infants and even cobras are sensitive to the influence of music. I still vividly remember the occasion when as a child I came under the

influence of soul-stirring music. I had gone with a party to Kumbakonam for a marriage there. I was then very young—under ten. In the place where we were staying I heard some one saying that there was to be a flute performance by a great expert in the next street that evening. I wandered to the next street and found a large crowd gathered in a huge pandal to listen to the flute played by a strikingly handsome (but blind) person. I went, I heard and I stayed for how long I do not know. My people who had planned to leave the place that evening found me missing when they were about to start, and so they started searching for me. Anyway it was late for them to get the train and so they postponed the journey. One search party came to the place where I was and they also stayed and listened to the flute. I had no idea of ragas then; but I understood from what others were saying that the raga the artist was so exquisitely elaborating was *Natakurinji*. It produced such a deep impression on me that when later on I began to sing ragas, it was not *Todi* or *Bhairavi* or *Sankarabharanam*, but *Natakurinji* that I first started elaborating. Similarly on another occasion the raga *Yadukulakambhoji* played on the nagaswaram by Sivakolundu produced an indelible impression on me.

In those spacious days when vidwans were patronised by rulers and zamindars and had not to play to the tune of anyone who came in with a four anna ticket, the vidwans enjoyed great liberty; they sang as they liked without having to keep to a programme which provided only twenty minutes for *ragalapana*, *tana* and *pallavi* all together. Some of them used to sing a raga for hours, and for even days without any repetition; they were capable of such originality and creative expression. Some specialised in some ragas so much so that they came to have the names of some ragas attached to their own names, such as Todi Sitaramiah,

Begada Subramania Iyer, Kedaragowla Narasimha Iyengar, and so on.

An interesting story has been told of Todi Sitaramiah who was a court musician at Tanjore. He was a great favourite of the Raja; his rendering the raga *Todi* was considered to be unrivalled. Sitaramiah was a spendthrift and in spite of all the favour showered on him by the Raja he was always in want. Once he was badly in need of money. He had pledged all his belongings for various debts incurred by him and so he could not again approach his creditors for money.

There was a money-lender at Tanjore who was somewhat of a Shylock, and so people went to him only as the last resource. Sitaramiah had to go to him for a loan. The money-lender offered to give the loan on some suitable security. Sitaramiah pleaded that he had already pledged all his properties and that there was nothing left over to pledge as security. The shrewd money-lender had a brainwave. He said, "Surely that cannot be. You must be having still something with you which you can pledge. Yes, I know you have something which you can offer as pledge. If you are prepared to pledge it, I shall let you have the loan at the usual rate of interest."

Sitaramiah was surprised, but his need was so great that he said to the money-lender, "Well, as far as I am aware, I have nothing of my own to pledge. If you mention something which is really my own, I am prepared to leave it with you as security for the loan."

The money-lender's eyes twinkled and he said, "Your *Todi* raga is still yours; you may pledge it and take the loan, and when you return the loan you can have it back."

Sitaramiah was non-plussed, but he had no choice and so he pledged his *Todi* and got the loan. From that day he could not sing his favourite raga. Days passed and the

Raja began to miss the *Todi* raga very much; he wondered why Sitaramiah did not sing *Todi* at all; it was a great surprise.

When he came to the court one day the Raja asked Sitaramiah to sing *Todi* for which he was hungering. Sitaramiah was in a fix; he was gulping in his throat and wringing his hands. On the Raja's demanding an explanation the truth came out. The Raja appreciated the shrewdness of the money-lender, cleared the loan taken by Sitaramiah and redeemed his favourite *Todi* raga.

Certain ragas are considered appropriate to certain hours of the day; for example, *Bhupalam* in the early morning, *Saveri* and *Dhanyasi* in the early forenoon, *Poorvakallyani* in the evening, *Kamboji* and *Nilambari* at night are considered suitable.

Pachampetta Nataraja Iyer was a great patron of music in Trichy District. Whenever musicians passed that way they used to stay with him for a while and spend some musically fruitful time in his company. Once the famous Maha Vaidyanatha Iyer happened to stay for a night with Nataraja Iyer. After supper Maha Vidyanatha Iyer, as was usual on such occasions, started singing. Nataraja Iyer wanted him to sing the raga *Bhupala*, which ought to be sung only in the early morning hours and not in the first half of the night. For a moment Vaidyanatha Iyer hesitated, and then said, "Certainly, I shall sing a shloka as ragamalika and include *Bhupala* also in the string of ragas."

He then started singing the shloka and kept the listeners spell-bound so that they lost count of time. Then he sang *Bhupala* raga also. It was so exquisitely rendered that it looked as if the dawn had come at midnight. As a matter of fact it was just dawn then. People were in such rapt attention that they did not know that many hours had passed and the next day was dawning.

Our musicians are very interesting people; they are intensely human and will do anything for the sake of friendship. They have a very lively sense of humour too. At a performance by one of our top-ranking musicians two friends, sitting in front of him, were counting the number of times the artist was using snuff. The musician noticed this and bided his time. When he was about to use snuff again he turned to the gentlemen in front and said (in a loud voice so that all could hear), "Sirs, this is the ninth time I am using snuff; take note and check this with your previous countings and verify." The whole house burst into boisterous laughter.

At a concert in which, by a strange turn of circumstances, a senior violin vidwan of high rank had to accompany a beginner, the late Tiger Varadachariar was asked to say a few words at the end. "Tiger" never uttered a word of disparagement about anyone. He complimented all the party in general terms. About the violinist he said: "What shall we say of our senior vidwan? His experience and knowledge are deep like an ocean. He is verily a mighty sea which receives into its wide bosom such pure and holy rivers like the Ganges as also the gutter water of Coovam." The implications are obvious.

There was a Zamorin at Calicut who was fond of music and had also a good knowledge of the art. He used to patronise deserving musicians and give them rich presents. Once a great pallavi vidwan happened to go to Calicut; the Private Secretary to the Zamorin, himself a rasika, arranged for a concert by the vidwan at the palace.

The Zamorin had one weakness; he would ask the artist to give beforehand the wording of the song he proposed to sing. When the vidwan had elaborated a raga and was about to begin the pallavi the Zamorin made his usual demand.

The vidwan got wild: he shouted. "Which fool would care about the sahitya of a pallavi?" and went away from the palace.

The Zamorin also got angry. The Private Secretary was a tactful man; he pacified the two and arranged for a recital the next day: he had managed to get the Zamorin to agree to waive his stipulation regarding the wording of the pallavi. The vidwan started the pallavi and elaborated it with such mastery and skill and charm that the Zamorin was highly pleased and made extra presents to the vidwan.

When, however, the artist was about to leave the palace, the Zamorin asked him to give the wording of the pallavi at least then. The vidwan faced the Zamorin and said, "I am prepared to give you the sahitya on condition that you will not get angry."

The Zamorin agreed to the condition, and the vidwan gave him the sahitya, and immediately ran away. The Zamorin was taken aback and got into a rage, but he could not do anything as the vidwan had in the meantime run away. The sahitya was *Samoodiri thavidu thinnu* meaning that the Zamorin ate the chaff, the implication being that instead of enjoying the pure art of music, the Zamorin was after the words which especially in a pallavi was as insignificant as the chaff as compared to the grain.

9. Folk Music

Folk music of a nation is a natural expression of the mass soul of the people making the nation. In fact any national art is or at any rate ought to be a true expression of the cultural soul of the nation. And music being the highest of the fine arts is the best and most vital expression of the nation's soul. While the higher and more elaborate musical expressions correspond to the higher and more intellectual section of the people, folk music expresses effectively and in simple, direct and straight-forward

manner the emotional experience of the general population. I have heard it said by people who have travelled wide that, while there are appreciable differences between the various kinds of musical technique obtaining in different parts of the world, there is a sort of similarly in folk music all over the world. This is but natural as the basic emotional impulses of humanity are similar all the world over. It is only in the sophisticated conventional society that a lot of artificial differences become manifest.

In India especially, where music has played an important part in the day to day life of the nation, folk music is inextricably woven into the life of the people. Indian people are essentially a musical people. They use music for almost every function in life; whether it is a religious ceremony or a social function or an agricultural pursuit they won't hesitate to use music to lighten their hearts and make their burden less heavy. They have a song for harvest, another for lifting water, and yet a third for loading a van and so on. In temples and on marriage occasions music is an indispensable factor.

A train-motor collision occurs in the morning; by noon the incident is set to music and printed as a leaflet, and in the afternoon it is sold in the trains and buses. This is a common phenomenon in South India. Music runs in our blood.

Here in India music has always been recognised as the handmaid of religion and a help for the realisation of the Supreme. In such a country it is no wonder that music is used freely for every possible purpose. I am now concerned with the type of music which we come across in villages, in the paddy fields, in work houses and so on.

Several varieties of these folk songs are found all over South India, especially in the Tamil Districts. The most important of these are Kummi, Thambangu, Tappan,

Lavani and Chindu, with its varieties like Vazhinadachinthu, Nondichinthu, Kavadichinthu, etc. Of these the Kavadichinthu (so called on account of its association with the carrying of Kavadi by the devotees on their shoulders) has attained a high degree of importance among the folk songs for various reasons. It has an intrinsic musical charm of its own; it depicts the universal longing of the human soul for union with the object of its devotion, the Nayaka-Nayaki bhava, bhakti which is the background of all devotional literature—the deity in this case being Lord Subrahmania, the most popular Deity in Tamil Nad. (Tradition has it that it was Lord Subrahmania who gave us the *muttamil*, Iyal, Isai and Nataka (literature, music and dance-drama).

Annamalai Reddiar—blessed be his memory—the famous author of Kavadichindu, has laid Tamil Nad under a deep debt of obligation by his great gift of the Kavadichindu which is classical in its theme, diction and rendering. There is no Tamilian heart which does not throb in response to his chindus.

There are also other varieties of folk-songs which convey moral lessons and expound philosophical truths, teach proverbs and narrate historical events, and so on.

Kerala is remarkably rich in the variety of folk songs, Malayalam boat song—Vanchipattu as it is called—is a speciality of the land.

One striking fact which emerges from a study of the folk-songs is that, while the tunes may not conform to the rules of Lakshana, they are not lacking in aesthetic quality; on the other hand it would look as if their very charm and appeal are the result of this apparent disregard of the requirements of technique.

10. Modern Trends in the Classical Music of South India

Till about a few decades ago, music and musicians were patronised chiefly by Maharajas and Zamindars and the rich. Those were spacious days and the musician lived without a care and devoted all his attention to music alone. But that patronage has now shifted from the few to the many; from the palace to the man in the street. The average musician of today cannot depend any more on the patronage of the aristocracy. He has to look for his support to the people at large and he has to keep them in good humour. The result is obvious. The professional musician is led to a series of compromises to make a good living.

In those olden days there was practically no Sabha or Association which supported the professional musicians, but now practically all the professionals have to depend upon the goodwill of these Sabhas and their officers. The Sabhas themselves have to cater to the demand and taste of their numerous members. It is true that music is now spread far and wide; but what has been gained in width has been unfortunately lost in depth. Inertia, physical as well as mental, is an inborn instinct in all creation. To take things easily, to do things superficially and get amusement without any effort is the order of the day. To understand and appreciate good music, the ears have to be trained at least to some extent. But the average man now is satisfied with what is superficial, with what just tickles the tympanum of his ears, and therefore he expects from the professional musician only just what he wants. Not only this, he becomes even impatient when some rasikas, who are connoisseurs of the art, want to listen to good and high class music from these musicians. As naturally the number of those people is large as compared with the number of rasikas their words prevail and only those musicians

who satisfy their whims are much in demand. If a Sabha has to run and make both ends meet, it has to satisfy the members on the one hand and make sure of a decent gate collection for the performance on the other. In short, the Sabhas are forced to become money-making concerns, though the money is intended to go to encourage and patronise good artists! The position of the professional musicians in such circumstances is not enviable indeed.

It is true that we are living in an age of democracy; the average man feels entitled to the amenities of life which were enjoyed till recently by just a few. The Society has a duty to provide this for him. It does not follow from this that the man in the street is to dictate to a professional musician as to what music he should give or what not. There are certain matters which cannot be decided on votes. Whether the solution of an intricate problem in electrical engineering is correct cannot be decided by votes. The opinion of a million who know nothing about the subject will certainly count as nothing against the opinion of one who knows. The average man may demand for a chance to hear music, but he cannot obviously dictate how a particular raga is to be sung. The question whether a particular Swarasanchara is admissible in a Raga cannot be decided by the average man or voted upon by a mixed assembly. In such matters expert opinion alone counts. Here I am reminded of the wise words of Sir Henry Wood who said, "Music is no place for a democracy. Let us have a few dictators." Unfortunately the modern tendency is to level *down* instead of levelling *up*. The musicians as well as the Music Sabhas have a duty to provide good music to the listeners and not merely to give the music they want. It is their duty to raise gradually the level of appreciation and create right taste for music. As matters stand at present, it will be a difficult task, but all good work is apparently difficult to start with. Everywhere there is a cry for

improving our musical standards as they have fallen low in recent years. It is time we do something to lift the general tone of our performances and also improve the taste of the average listener.

One of the outstanding characteristics of the modern age is hurry, rush, craze for excitement. Those days when people lived quietly and did things leisurely are gone. Everywhere people want speed at any cost. This is noticeable even in the field of music. I have heard performances in my younger days which used to last for five to six hours. I know of a great musician who would do only two or three kritis in two hours and spend two to two and a half hours in ragalapana and pallavi. They were musicians who sang their best and they were not dictated to by the listeners. A musician then was free to sing what he liked and according to his mood. Nowadays it has become a rare thing to hear any of the majestic classical pieces in slow tempo like:

"Najeevadhara" in Bilahari,
"Koniyadinapai" in Kamboji,
"SriRajagopala" in Saveri,
"Chereravademi" in Ritigowla,
"Marimarininnemoralida" in Kamboji.

People want to hear quick-moving songs. The tragedy is that even those songs which require to be sung in slow tempo for aesthetic effect are hurried through in our modern concerts.

Ragalapana has almost become a formality. The Raga-Tana-Pallavi item in the A.I.R. is, to my mind, almost a farce. I have found that in some of the modern classical concerts the time devoted to Raga-Tana-Pallavi is less than half an hour! I wonder why there should be that item at all. Is it a ritual or a formality which has to be gone through? If it is done at all let it be done properly. Why

should they not have two types of concerts, one intended for the average listener who is not much interested in Pallavi and elaborate Raga Alapana and consisting of only quick-moving pieces, and the other where elaborate Ragalapana and systematic Pallavi singing are prominent? This is a point which requires serious consideration.

Of late there is a tendency to lay greater stress on the manipulation side of music than on the aesthetic side. The primary appeal of music as of any art is to the emotion. To make music mechanical is tantamount to killing it. That is why we lay great emphasis on *Bhava* in music. Music without *Bhava* is no music at all. It is generally found that young students of music attempting to sing a Raga produce more a jumble of swaras, than the Ragas as such. A Raga though based upon swaras and grouping of swaras is something very much more than these; the swaras are the form but the life of the Raga is its Bhava. To bring out the bhava of a Raga requires skill and an inner sensitiveness. Master singers can do this successfully with all the Ragas they handle. Certain ragas stand out for their particular beauty and that beauty depends upon not the swaras but something behind and beyond the swaras. The young student unequal to this task resorts to singing ragas with very poor aesthetic appeal such as Charukesi, Sarasangi, Jotiswarupini, Dharmavati, and indulge in mere swara jugglery. Though we have a large number of ragas, it is not all of them that lend themselves to elaboration. We hear of 2400 ragas, 5184 ragas and even 34776 ragas, but most of these are "Ghost" ragas, to use the phrase of late Mr. K. V. Ramachandran. Such ragas are only jumbles of swaras and have no aesthetic reality about them.

Let me quote Mr. K. V. Ramachandran. "Like ghosts, we may seem to see them or fancy they exist; but they have no real entity. Of late, there has been a mass emigration of ghost ragas into Carnatic music. Ever since the intrusion

of pseudo-ragas without musical life or light our musicians have lost the faculty of singing or playing the real ragas...... with the lapse of the art of grand alapa they have lost the musical architecture." In many of our present-day concerts we rarely hear the alapana of Nattakurinji, Yedukulakambodi, Useni, Devagandhari, but even beginners dabble in ragas like Charukesi, Sarasangi, Vagadeswari, Jotiswaroopini and so on. Further comment is unnecessary. By long usage or otherwise, the first set of ragas mentioned above have acquired a unique grandeur, a characteristic charm and an individuality, all their own. They do not depend upon mere schemes or swaras. It is the graceful deviations from the actual swara points that make the charm and grandeur and sweetness and delicacy of those ragas. The second set of ragas on the other hand are only swara jargon; and so it is easier to handle them and produce some noise. No one with any musical sense will dare to do this with the other bhavaragas.

Let me not be mistaken as being against the advent of any new ragas, simple or involved. Art impulse is never static; it ever seeks newer and newer avenues of expression. Among the 72 melas formulated as a possibility by Venkatamakhi, there are of course some which do not lend themselves to be elaborated as ragas. But there may be some which may reveal some unique beauty not recognised so far. I am very much in favour of research in this direction to explore the possibility of giving life and form to some scales which now remain only as *scales* and have not been evolved into *ragas*. For example, Subhapantuvarali was only a scale so far. Even Sri Thyagaraja, who perhaps handled more melaragas than any other celebrity, is believed to have composed only one or two kritis in this raga. (Even this is doubted by several.) Still this mela is capable of being developed as a raga with its own characteristic bhava. This is sung as a major raga (under the name

Todi) in North India, and it is a musical feast to hear it expounded by a good North Indian ustad. One can never exhaust possibilities of musical expression; as long as life is dynamic there will be room for newer modes of such expressions and new melody moulds will be found to express new impulses of life. We should welcome all such expressions as enriching our cultural heritage. But no mechanical scheme or intellectual formula can be expected to do this. because all art expression is ultra-rational, super-intellectual and above mechanical formulation.

Another thing noticeable nowadays is the undue importance given to swara singing. Singing swaras was always an integral part of Pallavi in which the Sahitya was generally a small phrase and played only an insignificant part. But of late, neraval and swara singing have come to be an indispensable appendage for almost every kriti. The propriety of such an intrusion may well be challenged. There is a definite place set apart for those special features which will bring out the mastery of the artist; why then indulge in it in and out of season? And especially with beginners it seems to have become almost an obsession. The veriest tyros who cannot handle properly even some of the well-known ragas start indulging in swara singing, jumbling up swaras into premeditated tala groupings. The swara singing seems to have become a trick to justify wasting time. If one cannot keep an audience interested by giving soulful and appealing music he takes refuge under swara jumbling. Let me again quote Mr. K. V. Ramachandran: "Look at the other mediocrity of that facile verbiage swara singing, the process of bundling swaras according to set formulae! What is the aesthetic or spiritual value of a mechanical mix-up of rhythm and design? It was Wilde who said that the incompetent could always be correct............Is the rich sonorous material meant to deliver some pompous trifle? And have we nothing better to express through music's

celestial medium than the banalities of an outworn technique?"

When art, which ought to be a vital impulse vibrant with life and scintillating with upwelling emotion descends to formalism and conformity with rigid intellectual patterns and formulae, its death knell is sounded. One of the deplorable trends noticeable nowadays is the tendency to make music rigid and formal by laying too much emphasis on the so called "theory" and thereby stifling the life side of the art.

We should not forget the vital basis of our musical art. Art in India has always been considered a sacred function; music and devotion went always hand in hand. Good, soulful and ennobling music was generally inspired by devotion. I need not labour this point especially in India. Music is something Divine and the Masters of old showed great reverence towards Art. It was believed that Divinity was present where there was good music brimming with bhava and devotion. We may recall the old verse which says that God dwells not in Vaikunta, nor in the hearts of yogis nor in the sun, but where there is music sung by devotees. This aspect unfortunately has receded to the background, if not altogether disappeared, in recent times. I would make a forcible appeal for restoring the proper atmosphere which was generally associated with the music of the ancient scholars and composers.

What makes our music unique is the delicacy and subtlety which form the very soul of our music. Its charm and appeal depend on those delicate nuances, which form the back-bone of the art. There is a tendency nowadays to neglect this subtlety and go in for broad effects. Take for example group singing, in which may be included the so-called "orchestra"—orchestra in India can only mean Vadya Vrinda, that is group instrumental music. Simple pieces set

in tunes which do not involve delicacies or subtleties may be sung in group and may not lose much thereby. Our bhajans are examples of such group singing. In such concerts simple devotional pieces are sung by a number of people at the same time. But to sing highly classical and technical pieces in group is to stifle the very subtlety and fineness which go to make our classical music. It is at times felt that even accompaniments like violin and mridanga are a drag and take away much from the beauty of the music. Just imagine how the following compositions would fare if sung in chorus:—

"Yehi Annapoorne" in Punnagavarali,

"Neekedayaraga" in Nilambari,

"Ramabana" in Saveri,

"Yendudaki" in Todi,

"Adaya Sri" in Ahiri.

Then a word about the mike. It seems to have come to stay, but can the mike ever fit into the atmosphere of our music which is essentially "chamber music"? The very idea of amplifying those evanescent and pleasing soft sounds which adorn our music seems obnoxious. Generally the mike distorts the voice and instruments. In some places it converts music into shrieks and howls. The tragedy is that ears accustomed to such shrieks and howls become incapable of responding to anything soft and subtle. I know people would say that in these days performances are attended by thousands and we have to go in for loud-speakers. I can only say that in the olden days musicians had sung in the open courtyards of temples and they were heard by thousands. When the musician wants to be heard and the listener wants to hear, they will always come to a proper adjustment. Now the listener wants to hear only the artificial sound coming out of the mike and his ear has got accustomed to a certain degree of loudness below which

his ear cannot respond and the musician wants to make the listener hear him somehow. Especially if with little effort his voice could be heard very loudly by the listeners the musician is tempted to take the easier path. On account of this mike it is very rare to find silence in our concert halls. These halls have become social clubs where people meet and make conversation; and the listener has got accustomed to listen to music above all this sound. The whole thing is working in a vicious circle. If I am really anxious to hear, I shall certainly carefully attend and if every one is attentive, there would be perfect silence, and people can hear music even without a mike; also the musician will not take advantage of the mike and sing in very low pitch or any false voice. Doing away with this mike will in my opinion make a great improvement in the general tone of our classical musical concerts, in the amount of earnestness which a musician puts in and the degree of attention on the part of the audience.

Another *insidious mischief* done by the mike is the tendency on the part of the singer to lower his tonic note, *Adhara Shruti.* I can understand this in the case of musicians who are handicapped by their voice. Why should one whose voice can reach higher pitches lower his tonic and sing in ranges which are lower than what his voice would naturally warrant? Because a certain great musician who developed throat trouble lowered his tonic to enable him to give performances, it became the fashion for several others to do the same thing, though there was no reason at all for this lowering in their case. Also singing in a lower pitch means less effort and in any case there is the mike to amplify everything. Why then unnecessary exertion? Why not take the easier way? This is the line of argument which prevails. As we know, each voice has its own natural tonic. This should be so chosen that the voice could normally cover the regions from Panchama in the Manda-

rasthayi to Panchama in the Tarasthayi (this makes a total interval of two octaves). When singers lower their normal tonic the result sometimes is that their voice does not function properly in the lower levels and there is marked lack of Shrutilayam (blending with Shruti) in those levels.

In my own young days there was practically no singer whose Adharashruti was below what is now generally called the 4th Kattai (the fourth key of an ordinary hormonium—this will correspond to note 'C'). Nowadays a musician who can sing to a shruti of even the second key is a rare phenomenon. Some of our top-ranking singers have lowered their tonic to even one full major tone below the first key, i.e., nearly 'E' in the lower octave.

The effect of this on the accompanying instruments is deplorable. How can a violin or a mridangam tuned to such a low pitch give its best? Their total value is lost and their contribution to the richness of the concert is meagre. Of course the accompanists try to make up for this loss by intellectual display involving intricate manipulation. But this is not art.

As with our culture, our music also is individualistic in its basic structure, it is based upon the human voice. Even instrumental music when played solo follows the pattern of vocal music. That is why our compositions are confined to the range of the human voice and rarely go beyond two octaves. It is possible to do 3½ octaves on the Veena, but no piece goes beyond about 2 octaves. All this because the human voice is the primary basis for our music. In a musical concert the main artist dominates the whole show and the other participants are only *accompanists.* They merely follow the main artist. Even when they are given occasions to play solo they have to be within the limits determined by what the principal artist sings or plays. Generally in a South Indian musical concert (Vocal music) the accompani-

ments consist only of a violin and a mridangam. Occasionally (and of late more frequently) other tala instruments like Kinjira, Ghatam, Dolak, Moorsing, etc., are introduced. (I do not see why so many tala accompaniments should be introduced in a classical vocal concert. They may be good in their own way and perhaps they will fit in with a tala vadya programme.) In an ordinary vocal musical concert it is best to keep to only one tala instrument, mridanga and a violin. When the tala instrument alone is given a chance, all these other tala instruments may join, but at other times it is best they remain quiet.

Before closing I should like to mention a tendency which I have noticed of late on the part of some to tamper with the tunes of some of the old songs of settled pattern. I can understand in the case of good sahityas of old which have come to light recently for which the tune is not known, a competent person setting them to appropriate ragas and talas. But this has to be attempted only by a really competent person and not by all and sundry. This has happened in the case of many of the sahityas of Swathi Thirunal Maharaja for which tunes were not available; the late Gayaka Sikhamani Muthia Bagavatar set appropriate tunes for them. He was a vaggeyakara, competent to undertake this work. To meddle with an old song of recognised tune and set it to a new tune is not proper. Even if the new tune appears to be better, one has no right to set the old sahitya of another to what he considers to be a better tune. If that new tune is good, he can get a new sahitya fitted into it; nowadays we have any number of sahitya kartas who will gladly do it. Especially if the new tune is not an improvement upon the old one, this change-over is an inexcusable act of vandalism. I am putting it rather strongly because this has happened in recent years. I will just give one typical example. There is an old Tamil song "*Tandai tayirundal*" in Mukhari raga, Chapu tala, which had been

current for over sixty years. I have heard it sung in my childhood and I learnt it myself. It was also published in some books in the above raga and tala. This song is a kind of *Nindasthuti* (praising God in the garb of censure) and the tune fits in with the sentiment exceedingly well. Recently this song has been changed by some one to another raga and another tala; the most unfortunate thing is that it has been reproduced on the gramophone in this new form! Anyone who has any sense of propriety or aesthetic sensibility will be able to say that the new tune does not fit the song at all. It looks almost a parody. I have been wondering why people should indulge in such misguided undertakings. There are other cases also, perhaps not so bad. The song "*Sivalokanathanai*" which occurs in Gopalakrishna Bharati's "*Nandanar Charitram*" had been set by him in Senchurutti raga and I have heard it sung also in that raga. In recent years the raga has been changed to Nadanamakriya and this new raga has found a place even in a syllabus published by a University. There seems to be no justification for this transformation. Again the song, "*Ramanai Tharuvai*" in Arunachala Kavi's "*Ramanataka*" had been set by him in Mohana raga, but recently it has become a fashion with some to sing it in Sindhu Bhairavi raga. Another example of rather striking interest, the song "*Aaro ivar yaro*" in the same opera *Ramanataka*, which expresses Sri Rama's surprise at seeing Sita in king Janaka's palace and his inquisitiveness to know who she was, had been set by the composer in Saveri raga. It used to be sung in that raga and the raga and tune suit the occasion very well. Well, that tune has been recently altered and the piece is now sung in Bhairavi raga. I do not see what need arose for this change! I admit that the Bhairavi tune is excellent in itself. Why should the sahitya of Arunachala Kavi be smuggled into this tune? Could not a suitable new sahitya be found for this nice tune in Bhairavi? I hold

that the Saveri tune fits in with the sentimental and the situation better than the Bhairavi tune, excellent as this is in itself. To my mind this change is unwarranted. I can give many more examples. The point is however obvious. The song of the composer is his own art creation in a particular form. To change tunes, especially when such pieces have been current, is not justifiable, particularly when the new set up is not in any case an improvement. A better aesthetic sense on the part of rasikas as well as the musicians will, I feel sure, put a stop to such undesirable acts of intrusion and usurpation.

11. Dance Music of the South

In our ancient books *Sangita* (Music) has been defined as comprising song, instrumental music and dance. In other words Sangita was a combination or synthesis of music and dance. For a long time these two went together as component parts of the same art. Of these two it is obvious that dance should have been the earlier art. All art generally is only a generalised expression of our reaction to certain phenomena of life. Any emotional excitement in life is generally accompanied by movements in the outer form which ensouls that life. These outer expressions of an inner emotional experience are first seen in bodily movements. Expression through vocal articulation must have obviously come in later. A fawn, a kid, a child first expresses its joy or grief by movements in the body. In nature there is some kind of a relationship between an inner experience and the outer expression of that experience. From a study of such relationships certain general principles emerge and these have been set forth in the works of great writers like Bharata and Nandikeswara.

When later on music developed as an art by itself it served two functions. On the one hand it developed independently as pure art music and on the other it served the

needs of the Dance art which also was developing on its own lines independently. There was, however, this difference, that while music can find expression for itself independently of dance, the art of dance needed music as an integral part of its function.

As music developed as an independent art it developed along lines some of which had no bearing on dance at all. Of course it also continued to subserve the needs of dance.

Dance has two primary aspects, generally called *Tandava* and *Lasya.* In the former, movements and rhythmic patterns—some of them intricate and subtle—dominate. Laya or tala aspect of music is stressed here. In *Lasya,* however, emotional expression (bhava, as it is called) is the dominant note. It is, therefore, obvious that music used for the dance art should be chosen so as to serve the particular needs of the dance item for which it is used.

In the first place it is a mistake to think that any music can be used for dance or that any song or composition can be danced. Generally musical compositions now used in dance are pieces specially composed for purposes of dance. For the Tandava aspect of dance we have pieces like *jatiswara, tillana* and some special tvpes of *varna.* For *Lasya* where *bhava* is important we have padas, javalis, some varnas, and verses *specially* suitable for *abhinaya.* Though there is no hard and fast rule as to the nature of the theme chosen for *abhinaya* it has been almost an unbroken tradition to choose *sringara* (erotic) pieces for this purpose. There are valid reasons for this. All art is Divine in Indian Culture; dance, music, painting, etc., are all sacred vocations. Art and religion have always gone hand in hand in this country. The ultimate object of all art is to lead the human soul to achieve union with the Divine. This seeking for the Divine by the human soul is *bhakti,* devotion which is only one aspect of Love. In describing the various forms of this devotion it has been said that the

most effective form is *nayaka-nayaki bhava*, the human soul surrendering itself as the beloved (*nayaki*) of the One Lover (*nayaka*) of the Universe. I need not stress this point further. Viewed from this stand-point even the apparently erotic songs will reveal a high purpose.

Also pieces composed for *abhinaya* are made with this particular purpose definitely in view. The song should contain mostly words or ideas which lend themselves to the gesture language of dance. It is found that in general "erotic" themes meet this need very well. I do not mean that other emotions cannot be roused or that pieces cannot be composed on other themes. But it happens that in our lyric literature the most suitable themes are in *sringara rasa* and they are available in plenty. I have seen a few other themes also danced and with effect. Pieces like 'Innamum Orutharam" of Gopalakrishna Bharati, though obviously not erotic, are eminently suitable for dancing. But such pieces are rare. It has also to be borne in mind that all erotic songs may not be "danceable"—if I may coin a word to express what I have in my mind. For a piece of music to be 'danceable', especially in *lasya* style, certain minimum requisites are essential. The raga, the tala and the tempo should be in keeping with the *rasa* intended to be conveyed by the song. Also the sahitya should consist of words whose meanings can be adequately expressed in gesture language with the help of the eyes, hands, bodily movements and mudras. Of late, it has become the fashion to dance compositions of Saint Tyagaraja like "Ra Ra Seeta ramanee manohara" and other compositions like "Varukalamo" in *Nandan Charitram*, and "Tiruvadi Saranam". Frankly these are found to be flat and wooden, for the simple reason that they are not and were not intended to be "danceable". The best pieces provided by our lyric literature for this purpose are the *padas*, some of the *javalis*, *padavarnas*,

songs and verses from Jayadeva's *Gita Govindam*, verses from *Krishna-karnamrutam* and so on.

The general programme for a Bharatnatyam recital consists of:

(1) Alaripppu
(2) Jathiswaram
(3) Sabda
(4) Varna
(5) Some padas and javalis
(6) Tillana
(7) Some verses in Sanskrit.

Item (1) is only some sort of dedication to the art of dance. Item (5) deals mostly with the *lasya* aspect where emotions and expressions are predominant; this is the most appealing part of the programme as also item (7). In *varna* both *abhinaya* and rhythm are combined. In the other items we may say that the *tandava* aspect is stressed and rhythm (*Laya*, *tala* and *kalapramana*) plays the important part.

It has not been sufficiently recognised that *tala* (rhythm) has much to do with evoking human emotions. Laya has its own world of bhava like Raga. It is a matter of common experience that some suitable change in the tempo in which a piece is rendered often changes the emotional response in us. This accounts for compositions being set in varying tempos. Generally *padas* and *padavarnas* are meant to be sung in slow tempo and javalis in slightly higher tempo. In rendering musical pieces for dance this aspect of *layabhava* has to be kept in view so as to produce maximum effect.

In general the types of music intended for a concert and for a dance recital are not the same and should *not* be the same. Pieces meant for dance should be carefully

chosen having in view their structure, their tempo, their sahitya and the suitability of the music in which they are set. It is an aesthetic blunder to think that any song can be danced. Only "danceable" songs should be chosen for dance recitals.

12. Hidden Potentialities of Music

In India from time immemorial extraordinary powers have been claimed for music. Several stories of miracles worked by music have been handed down to us by tradition. Whether these stories are authentic or not, it cannot be denied that such a belief has persistently existed.

For one thing music has always been considered Divine in origin. Great rishis and devas have been associated with music. The authorship of some standard treatises on music, dance, aesthetics and so on, has been attributed to great rishis. In ancient Samskrit literature there are descriptions of music concerts in which Great Ones like Brahma, Indira, Prahlada, Narada, the Great Kumaras have taken part and the sage Shuka acted as interpreter of the performance. Music is intimately connected with Divinity.

As I have said above, abnormal powers have been ascribed to music. It is said that Muthuswami Dikshitar brought rain by singing the raga *Amritavarshani.* I have actually seen rains being brought about by chanting the *Varunajapa.* The raga *Megharanjani* also is considered capable of bringing about cloud-formation in the sky and subsequently rain. *Nagavarali* subdues snakes. We hear of snake-charmers, especially in the village parts. I have heard from authentic sources that the late Nagaswaram Vidvan Sivakozhundu could draw out cobras from their holes and make them swing their hoods rhythmically in tune with the music of his nagaswaram.

We have the following traditional story about the raga *Deepak.* Gopal Naick was an expert musician in the court

of the great Akbar. One day Akbar was asking Gopal Naick whether he really believed in the mysterious powers attributed to music and particularly about the alleged power of Deepak to *kindle* fire. Gopal Naick affirmed his belief in those powers. Akbar challenged him to demonstrate the power of *Deepak* to produce fire. Gopal Naick said, "Sire, I can prove it; but the moment I sing the essential part of the raga I shall be consumed by fire". Akbar could not believe; but he suggested a demonstration with adequate safe-guards against fire, and said, "Gopal, I suggest that you stand neck-deep in the river Jumna and sing. Certainly no fire can consume you then!" Gopal Naick was not, however, so sure; but he was intent on removing the doubts in the mind of the Emperor regarding the powers of music. So he agreed and started singing *Deepak* raga standing neck-deep in the river. The story goes that when he fell into the proper mood and sang the characteristic phrases of the raga, his body burst into flames and was reduced to ashes in an instant and the ashes were washed down the stream. That was how Gopal Naick met his end.

We are told that every occurrence in this world of phenomena leads us in the ultimate analysis to vibrations. It is only a very limited range of these vibrations in a limited number of media that are cognisable by our outer senses. A certain gamut gives the experience of sound, another gamut the phenomenon of light and so on; but there are ranges of vibrations below as well as above our sensuous experiences. In the case of music, the vibrations set up in air affecting certain regions in our auditory organism convey certain impressions to the brain which in its turn relates them to other aspects in our nature on the principle of correspondence, i.e., the sense vibrations are converted into subtle vibrations in some of the subjective aspects of our nature, mind, emotion, intuition, etc. It is a matter of common experience that sense experiences very

often produce results in aspects of a man's nature not so obviously related to the outer senses. Man is not merely a bundle of organs and senses. The physical part is the least important part of his existence. He has an emotional and intellectual life, a moral life, a superintellectual or intuitional life and a spiritual life of his own. Though these are far too subtle to be clearly envisaged by the ordinary man, any thinking individual will be able to see the important part played by these aspects of human nature in the life of the individual.

Musical expression, as any art expression, is fundamental in human beings and its appeal is universal. All art is in essence an expression of the inner being in man, and music, the queen of the arts, is especially so. It is fundamentally related to the aesthetic and super-intellectual aspects of life. Just as spoken words express our inner thoughts however inadequately, music expresses some of the indefinable, subtle experiences of human nature in a way that it alone can do. The mode of achievement of this may be vague and may escape our analysis, but then in the very nature of things it ought to escape such analysis. Edward Carpenter speaking of the emotional appeal of all arts says—"Some times people ask what is the meaning of such and such a work? Meaning be hanged". It is this, at times unexpressible, subtle, vague, elusive appeal that is essentially characteristic of all Indian Art, and especially of music.

We have heard of the oft-quoted verse in Samskrit:

Pasurvetti Sisurvetti Vetti Ganarasam Phanee.

In one sense this is literally true. A beast, a child on the side of innocence and a serpent on the side of the aggressive are responsive to music properly chosen. If a lullaby is not able to lull a child to sleep, one may feel certain that there is something wrong with the melody. If a good flute player or Nagaswaram player is not able to

calm down a hissing cobra, it is time he examines and finds out what is wrong with him. In the same way, if any of our musicians finds he is not able to evoke any appeal at least in a certain section of his hearers, he has to examine himself with a view to discover what needs mending in his musical items.

Raga is the basis of Indian music; we may say that it is the soul of our musical system. Each *raga* has its own essential, unique, aesthetic quality, called *bhava*; each *raga* has an individuality of its own; it is as it were a unique entity. No one may dare to do anything which will impair a *raga's* uniqueness. Each *raga* is associated with a *devata* (presiding deity), which is the ensouling principle which gives life and unique structure to the *raga*.

(We may have seen pictorial representations of some of our *ragas*, especially from the Bengal school of painting. Some of them are remarkable and convey the characteristics of the *ragas* they represent).

In this connection it will be of great interest to note that an young Soviet scientist has succeeded in transforming musical sounds into colour patterns. This discovery is of great importance; we shall hereafter not only "hear" music but "see" it too. May it not be that the *raga devatas* as conceived by our ancients are only music "seen" in colourful patterns?

It is generally believed that all vibrations down here have their correspondences in subtler realms of being. Sound and form are closely linked; form and colour have some mutual association. The idea is that music can build forms in the inner regions and these forms are directly dependent on the music which originates them. If the music is flawless the forms will be beautiful; otherwise the forms may be ugly, truncated or maimed. This is very well illustrated in the following story.

Narada, the sage bard, used to delight Lord Vishnu in Vaikunta every day with his music. And the Lord used to enjoy it and show his approbation by the usual gestures such as shaking of the head and so on. In course of time Narada got to be cocksure of his expertness and ability to please the Lord, and a touch of pride and over-confidence began to manifest itself. Pride is the harbinger of downfall in every region, and in the case of great sages it is unpardonable. The Lord noticed this and wished to teach Narada a lesson.

One day when Narada was playing his veena before the Lord, he noticed that the Lord was not giving any sign of approbation; on the contrary there were frequent frowns on the Lord's face indicating displeasure. Narada at once knew that something was wrong, and falling at the Lord's feet, asked to be enlightened as to the cause of the displeasure. The Lord smiled and said, "If you desire to know what real music is, go to Hanuman who is performing *tapas* in Kandamadana hill and learn it from him."

Narada set forth to meet Hanuman. On the way when he was passing near a grove he heard the wailings of a number of women and went into the grove to ascertain the cause. He was shocked at what he saw. He saw a group of otherwise beautiful damsels, disfigured in various ways; some with their noses cut, some with other limbs dismembered—a ghastly and pitiable sight. Moved at the heart Narada made enquiries as to the cause of their plight. They said, "We are the *raga devatas*; a rishi named Narada played such bad music today in Vaikunta that we have been reduced to this plight. It is only a really good musician who knows our true forms that can bring us back to our original shapes." Narada was humbled. He confessed to them who he was. He said that he was going to Hanuman to learn true music and he promised to restore their original forms

as an act of expiation for the sin he had in his ignorance and pride committed against the *devatas.*

Narada went to meet Hanuman in his hilly home and explained his mission to him; the latter took the veena from Narada and began to play on it. Narada was simply astonished at the mastery and finish of Hanuman's music and forgot himself in the enjoyment of that soulful music. After a while Hanuman stopped his playing and put the veena down on the floor. After explaining some subtle points regarding the technique of the art he asked Narada to play on his veena on the lines explained by him. Narada tried to lift his veena from the ground, but it would not move. When Hanuman was playing veena the rocky floor had melted and when he put it down it was on this molten granite. When the rock cooled and solidified the veena had got stuck up in it. Narada did not know what to do. Hanuman thereupon suggested that Narada might sing and melt the rock and take out the veena. Narada tried and tried but in vain. The story goes that Hanuman sang, melted the rock and then took out the veena. Narada was cured of his pride.

One important point comes out of this story apart from the idea of *raga devatas.* Music can produce such physical effect as melting a rock. There is nothing strange in this. It is well-known that a glass tumbler can in certain circumstances be broken to pieces by drawing a violin bow along the rim of the tumbler. We also know that if some sand is scattered on a thin metal plate and a bow is drawn across the edge the sand arranges itself into beautiful geometrical shapes.

The appeal of Art is, however, primarily to human emotion. If a piece of music, or for that matter, any art fails to have an emotional appeal it is no art. When people attempt to read any meaning — which is essentially an

intellectual function — into a work of art, they are missing the basic function of art. By first rousing the emotion and then sublimating it music lifts one into supra-intellectual regions — intuitional and spiritual.

As expressing human emotions, there is no other aspect of art or philosophy which can excel music. Human emotions, while they can in general be grouped under several heads, are beyond clear-cut definition. We can only deal with certain broad divergences. Some of these emotions are very difficult to express either by words or by action; but such emotions can be expressed by music. I have myself felt that emotions like *shanti, self-surrender* and so on are best expressed either in music or not expressed at all. While we may not agree with the classification of our current ragas according to their emotional appeal, it is beyond doubt that certain ragas definitely evoke some typical emotions.

Music has its own language, the language of emotions; and as human emotions are universal emotions such as joy, fear, depression, despair are universal and so the appeal of music which uses such emotions as its language must be universal.

The one vital difference between expressing human thoughts in spoken words and expressing human emotions through music is the fact that while spoken words may unconsciously or deliberately mislead and give erroneous impressions. the musical expression of the inner emotion can never mislead, because it is not in general based on any conventional combination of words as in the case of speech; and hence understanding human nature through its musical expression will lead to a truer and better understanding than perhaps through the camouflage of spoken words.

We know that the soul-culture of a nation (or an individual) finds the best and truest expression in music and

other fine arts. This culture has two aspects: one universal, common to all humanity, based on the fundamental unity of Life. The other aspect is distinctive and expresses the unique characteristics of the national culture and enables the nation to make its unique contribution to the integrated and harmonised world-culture. Though this is distinctive it is not alien to or incompatible with other cultural expressions. On the other hand it adds to the beauty and richness of the synthetic world culture. Hence one should be careful in effecting any changes in the cultural expressions of a nation. That was why Plato warned people against tinkering with the music-style of a nation lest such a tinkering should lead to disturbance in the very foundations of the State. Of course this does not mean that we should not enrich our music by assimilating ideas which can be adapted without violence to the basic characteristics of our musical system.

There are certain other aspects of music which have not yet come to be universally recognised. We hear now-a-days of colour being used for the curing of diseases. In mental hospitals it is found that colour plays a very important part on various types of dementia. It has been found that red coloured glass for window shutters tends to put more activity into people who are suffering from mental langour, morbidity etc. In the same way, it is quite possible that different types of music may be used as treatment for various types of mental disorders. Any disease is in essence an abnormality and all treatments are attempts to introduce normal conditions where abnormality exists, and music to my mind can be used to minimise such abnormalities. It is a potential field for investigation and our music lovers and experts will do well to start an investigation in this unexplored field. I do not see why, in a mental hospital, there could not be a "Todi" ward, or a "Kalyani" ward, or a "Mohanam" ward for those people whose ab-

normal conditions stand a chance of being influenced for the better by these particular ragas. I am sure that turbulent lunatics could to a very large extent be made amenable and to some extent quieted by *Neelamburi* or *Yadukula Kambhoji*. Similarly, cynical and morbid temperaments could be enlivened by *Atana* or *Begada*. This is a field of investigation which is worth being taken up by people who are really interested in musical art.

As an example of the characteristic quieting influence music has on unruly natures I may mention an experiment tried and found effective in a school of Madame Montessori. A teacher who found one class particularly turbulent started giving music and dancing lessons to the pupils. The result was remarkable; they gradually became quiet and well-behaved. When one of the pupils was asked why she left off jumping about she simply looked up and said, "It isn't nice to jump." That small phrase of the pupil sums up tersely the potency of music.

It may also be mentioned here that "in prisons, too, some remarkable results have been achieved with music. Prisoners have been turned from a resisting attitude toward a willing and co-operative frame of mind."

Why human beings only! Even computing machines relax to music. Dr. B. J. Goldacre and Mr. D. Bean of the Chester Beatty Research Institute in London have evolved an ingenious apparatus in which artificial electronic cells are linked together in such a way that each can communicate electrically with every other cell. A cell roused for the purpose causes an oscillator to give off a musical note. By this arrangement relief can be given to "nervous breakdowns" in the machine. The press article from which this information is extracted says, "Human beings can't claim a monopoly in nervous breakdowns. Expensive electric computors too can suffer from the sort of tension that leads to break-

down; and one of the most surprising possibilities of a new piece of machinery.........is that it can prevent computors from breakdown by enabling them to compose and sing their own music for relaxation."

Musical therapy has come to stay; experiment after experiment has been made and it is now definitely established that music can cure diseases. Muhammad Shafi, centuries ago, was practising musical therapy and was prescribing certain musical melodies for certain diseases. We are now told that a Russian Professor claims that "music is capable of improving the sight as much as 25 per cent." It has also been reported that bag-pipe music saved the life of a wounded Scotsman.

They have been able to cure certain specific ailments like headache and so on by the use of music. Time is not far off when doctors will prescribe music instead of medicines for at least some of the common ailments. It has, however, been pointed out that in adopting musical therapy the doctor should make himself familiar with the patient's temperament and environment.

Thus we see what all powers are inherent in music. Who knows what the future will reveal to us of its further possibilities! It may be that in future years wider and greater powers and deeper potentialities will be revealed and they will be recognised and also put to good use by the people at large.

13. Music and Education

One of the most prominent features of modern educational reconstruction is the idea that is gaining ground that a child is a national asset, that the education which we now give to our children makes the nation of to-morrow and that a child is not merely a clean slate on which the teacher can write whatever he likes, nor an empty vessel into which the teacher can pour willy nilly any stuff what-

soever, but that he is a human entity, born with certain tendencies and capacities, some potential and some actual and that the object of education is to draw out these faculties, to nourish and cultivate the good tendencies and thereby cause the atrophying of the bad ones. Each human being brings to this world some special gift to give to it; at the same time he also comes to learn some lessons which can be learnt only here. Rarely two children are exactly alike in physical features, emotional tendencies and mental equipment. While environment has much to do with the development of a child's nature, we cannot ignore the fact that there are some definite faculties which the child brings with him, some tendencies that require careful nurture, some other qualities which lie hidden in his very nature but will come out if properly unfolded and nourished. Time was when the children were intended for the School and not the School for the children, when to cram up certain fashionable shibboleths and get a certain percentage of marks in an examination was considered success in education, when to grind a child through the dull machinery of a rigid and unevolving curriculum was taken as equivalent to making him or her a good citizen. But those ideas are fast going away. Attempts after attempts are being made by enthusiasts to study the child from a new standpoint and organise its education accordingly. The child is recognised as an essential unit in the national complex, and it has to be so handled as to enable it to find its place in the larger life of the nation and give unto it what it has brought with it, so that the nation may be all the better for one child properly trained and educated.

We know that there are three, or for the matter of that, four aspects of human nature which we have to consider in dealing with the education of a child, viz., the physical, the emotional and the intellectual. Beyond this, some hold, there is the spiritual nature in an individual in

which we find the synthesis of the other three aspects and which, as it were, forms the background to which these aspects are related. A system of education which neglects any of these aspects must be in the nature of things imperfect. I am afraid that the only aspect which mostly claims the attention of the educational authorities is the intellectual and that too not in the right way. Physical culture, though some extension is paid here and there to it, is not well organised. As for the education of the emotional nature, which is a very important part of our nature, very little attention is being paid to it. And it is in this connection that I should like to make a plea for the introduction of music as an integral part of our educational system.

Art in general and music in particular exerts a potent influence on our lives; it is one of the most natural and, at the same time, effective modes of self-expression. All evolution is only a process of self-expression, whether in the case of a nation or that of an individual. Art is as necessary to life as philosophy or science, religion or ethics. All art, as all true science, takes us to the Reality behind phenomena. Nature, mysterious as she is, unveils her mysteries even more to the artist than to the philosopher or the scientist. All philosophies try to find a synthesis for all life's processes, to glimpse the ideas behind the outer phenomena which are only various expressions of those ideas. The philosopher reaches them through his philosophy, the scientist through his experiments, the devotee through his love of God and the philanthropist through the service of humanity. But the artist senses the Reality behind through the beauty and harmony of God as manifested in Nature.

And of all arts music is considered to be the highest. All other arts—painting, sculpture, drama, architecture, poetry—in some way tend to reach the condition of music. We generally express our ideas regarding other arts in terms of musical thought. The following words of Walter Pater

bring out very clearly this aspect of music: "All art constantly aspires towards the condition of music. It is the art of music which most completely realises this artistic ideal, this perfect identification of form and matter. In its ideal consummate moments the end is not distinct from the means, the form from the matter, the subject from the expression; and to it, therefore, to the condition of its moments, all the arts may be supposed constantly to tend and aspire. Music then,......is the true type or measure of consummate art".

Why is that so? Because music has that mystical property of elevating our emotions to a very high plane of being, purifying them and thereby recreating our whole nature. "The Last Chord" puts this idea beautifully.

> I know not what I was playing,
> Or what I was dreaming then,
> But I struck one chord of music
> Like the sound of a great Amen.
> It quieted pain and sorrow,
> Like love overcoming strife ;
> It seemed the harmonious echo
> From our discordant life.
> It linked all perplexed meanings
> Into one perfect peace,
> And trembled away into silence.
> As if it were loath to cease.

That is the power of music. In some mysterious way it takes us to sublime regions where struggle and strife cease, where all "perplexed meanings" fuse into one perfect Peace, where we know not aught but harmony and repose. And the musician, if he be a true artist, senses this through his music. It is his special privilege to rise above

the world's turmoil and sing for us harmony and peace, translate for us Divine mysteries in terms of our emotions. Profoundly true are the words of Browning:

> Sorrow is hard to bear and doubt
> is slow to clear,
> Each sufferer says his say, his scheme
> of weal and woe:
> But God has a few of us, whom
> He whispers in the ear
> The rest may reason, and welcome,
> 'tis we musicians know.

Music, as I mentioned at the outset, is one mode of self-expression. A human being must be essentially musical though he may not be a good singer. Musical instinct is as innate in human nature as any other instinct, and a system of education which neglects this important aspect of child-training is no education in the real sense of the word. If education is to draw out our faculties and help us in expressing our inner nature in all its possible modes, it cannot afford to neglect this wonderfully synthesising quality in our nature. We are all, to a greater or smaller extent, artistic, and our education must help us in developing that art and contributing our own share to the advancement of National Art.

The value of musical instruction in schools can never be overestimated. Music is a great purifier, it cleanses the school as it does our homes of all that is ugly to our senses. It gives a real tone to all that forms part of the school life. In ways which may be at times imperceptible, it works out an emotional alchemy, expunges the dross from human nature and makes it pure, harmonious and balanced. In an institution where good music is taught by really good musicians many of the problems of discipline will be automati-

cally solved. The child's nature becomes refined, delicate and responsive to higher impulses and ideas.

Madame Montessori, prominent among the ranks of modern educational reformers, says: "I have tried to have the directress of the 'Children's House' in Milan, who is a gifted musician, make a number of trials and experiments, with a view to finding more about the musical capacity of children.. She was greatly surprised to discover the educational disciplinary effect of such music...She now noticed that as she multiplied and repeated the rhythm exercises the children little by little left off their ugly jumping, until finally it was a thing of the past. The directress one day asked for an explanation of this change of conduct. The older children gave various replies, whose meaning was the same:

> 'It isn't nice to jump'.
> 'Jumping is ugly.'
> 'It is rude to jump.'

This was certainly a beautiful triumph for our method".

What we may fail to achieve through a number of sermons or moral lessons may be easily, and at the same time pleasantly, accomplished through music.

The psychology of music is a very interesting study. In some mysterious way music (as also all other arts to some extent) goes to affect the child's character for the better. The harmony of the vibrations set up by music produces a wonderful soothing influence on the nervous system; in very many cases tends to curb the otherwise rebellious tendencies of many a youth. Even snakes are charmed by music, the deer and the cows are moved by harmony of sounds. Is it then a wonder that a human being is moved by music? The wonder is that we are not more musical than we are. An unmusical nature is an abnormality, a freak of nature.

And so the healthy development of our children's character is to a very large extent accelerated and helped by instruction in music. The ancient Greeks realised this so well that they planned their whole politics in such a way that music and art played a very important part in every kind of national activity. The moral effects attributed to music and dancing were "regarded as of such importance as to influence profoundly the whole constitution of the State". That is the power of music; one can in a musical atmosphere play upon the emotions of our school children as a musician plays on the string of a Veena or a Sitar. We can make apparently dull and irresponsive pupils wonderfully alert and responsive provided we create the necessary musical atmosphere. It is no exaggeration to say that there is no saying to what extent we can mould and develop the character of school children if only we give a very prominent place to music in our educational institutions.

We are now teaching ever so many things to our pupils in the schools, some of course useful, but some of doubtful utility. We must see that music is given the place it deserves in our institutions. I would even go to the extent of saying that, if it comes to that, we could omit some of the subjects we are teaching at present and put in music in their place. Our pupils will be all the better for it.

There are a number of ways in which we can introduce music in our schools and utilise its influence to bring about an improved state of things. The school work may begin and end with music. Instruction begun in the harmonious atmosphere produced by music is bound to be more impressive than otherwise. As many opportunities as possible may be found to introduce music and singing in class work And above all, music may be taught, I may say must be taught, to the pupils as one of the subjects of instruction. At the hands of the educationalists and the authorities con-

cerned, the art of music must find a much better reception and more sympathetic treatment than now.

The greatness or littleness of the nation in the future is, to a very large extent, dependent on how the youth of today are trained. In the first place, they have to become cultured citizens, they must help our Nation to express the best in her along her own lines and consistently with her special genius. The typical man or woman of culture has always "a certain amount of intuition playing about him or her." He is not merely a scholar, but he is—at any rate ought to be—one who would grasp the essence of things, understand the fitness or otherwise of certain modes of thought and activity and will have an instinctive sense of proportion in things connected with our lives. He will intuitively feel whether a thing is in or out of place in a given scheme. If we analyse all the aspects of what we call culture we shall find that all of them lead up to this one distinguishing feature. And music enables one to do that, though the *modus operandi* of the subjective process resulting in that swift intuition is not so very obvious. An artist, a musician, will be distinguished by the possession of this superrational faculty of intuition which will, in some mysterious way, enable him to grasp the essence of things, to sense and assimilate harmony and shake off inharmonious things. All this he will be able to do not so much by cold logic or processes of sequential reasoning, as by a swift perception which like a lightning flash illumines his vision and makes him know things as they are and not as they seem to be or as they are by reason argued to be. This is the peculiar gift of the artist, and so, music goes a very long way towards making an all-round man or woman of culture.

The second idea at the back of an educational system properly organised must be, as I said just now, to help the citizen to express himself as a unit of the Nation to which

he belongs. Each nation has a soul of its own which tries to express itself in several modes of thought and activity, and we are all, in one sense, only cells in that bigger organism. The standard culture of an Eastern nation differs, in several essential points, from that of a Western nation. The very outlook on life varies with different human races and that colours the different aspects of a nation's life. And so in Art there is a great national Art peculiar to India. India's soul has always expressed itself in certain definite modes of musical thought. There are some special features about Indian music which distinguish it from other musical systems of the world. And if our youths are to be trained to be channels for the expression of our national consciousness the music we impart to them must be truly national, truly Indian in spirit. There is nothing to prevent an Indian from admiring or learning foreign music, but then he must already have learnt Indian music. An Indian who does not care for the music of his country cannot really understand any foreign music, though he might be able to indulge in spurious imitation. Plato said that "the introduction of a new kind of music must be shunned as imperilling the whole State, since styles of music are never disturbed without affecting the most important political institutions". While we should allow our musical system to evolve and assimilate external ingredients to its advantage, we should also see that it retains its distinctive feature and that, if any change is made at all, "such change must be organic, not sudden. and it must be an evolution in accordance with the heart of the national genius". And so I plead that while music should form part of our school curriculum it should be essentially Indian for Indian Students.

14. Music in Travancore

The Royal House of Travancore have always been patrons of music and other fine arts. Some of its members had made names not only for the encouragement they gave

to fine arts and their votaries who gathered in their courts, but they had been great artists themselves, and among these stands out prominently the late Sree Swati Tirunal Maharaja. Even earlier than this Royal genius there were members of the Royal House who were great musicians, as for example, Aswati Tirunal (1756-1788) whose songs are sung in temples even to-day, Rani Rukmini Bai (1800-1837) whose kriti in Mukhari ("*Sreekantesa*") is well-known. Earlier still, about a thousand years ago a Ruler of Travancore composed music. Later on there were composers of the *Attakathas* in which music was used plentifully. But the hey-day of music was in the time of Sri Swathi Tirunal.

The end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century have been the golden age for Carnatic music. It was in this period that the great saint Thyagaraja, Syama Sastri and Muthuswami Dikshitar (the "musical trinity" as they are called) flourished and flooded South India with their masterly and exquisite music. It was also at this time that Swathi Tirunal lived in Travancore (1813-1847) and made his unique contribution to the music lore of South India. Western Ghats have been to some extent responsible for the land of Kerala not being so well-known as it ought to, especially about a century ago, when communication between the two coasts of the Madras Presidency was few and far between. But this made it possible for some of the distinctive features of the Kerala Culture being kept *intact*. That was also the main reason why the compositions of Swathi Tirunal did not spread in the eastern districts as those of the musical trinity. In Travancore the *Sopana* style was in vogue for a very long time. Jayadeva's hymns (*Ashtapatis*) which became very popular in South India came to Travancore also and were adapted to the local style and sung in temples. The *Sopana* style is so called because its movements are slow, steady and gradual. To one whose ears are accustomed to quick movements and

sharp thrills this style may appear to be dragging and monotonous, but it has its own charm and there is an atmosphere about it which gives it its distinctiveness.

Swathi Tirunal Maharaja was truly a great man, great in many ways. He was a poet, a great devotee, a statesman, a musician and a scholar of repute. His reign though short was crowded with remarkable achievements; many of the institutions which are now our pride were started or inspired by this master mind. Though he lived but for 34 years and reigned for 18, it has been a full and rich life. He was master of 13 languages and composed songs in five of them. His personality and fame attracted very eminent musicians to the State. Among the musicians who adorned his court were Vidwan Koil Thampuran of Kilimanoor, Iravi Varman Tampi, Kshirabdi, Sastrigal, the famous Vadivelu and his brothers, Parameswara Bhagavatar (of Palghat), Cunniah (a disciple of Thyagaraja) and Meruswami. Of these Vadivelu, Meruswami and Parameswara Bhagavatar greatly influenced his compositions. The Royal composer has himself said that for his compositions he took as model those of Margadarsi Sesha Aiyengar of Srirangam who lived in the 17th century and composed mostly in Sanskrit, (he used the word *Kosala* for his Mudra). The range of his compositions is vast and as referred to above, he composed in Sanskrit, Malayalam, Canarese, Hindi and Telugu. His compositions comprise Tana Varnas, Chowka Varnas, Padas, Kritis, Tillanas, Upakhyanas and so on. The following list gives the approximate numbers:—

Tana Varnas	2
Chowka Varnas (one in Telugu, one in Manipravalam and seventeen in Sanskrit) ...	19
Padas (The famous "Pannagendra Sayana" is one of the padas)	65
Navaratri Kirtanas	9
Nava Raga Malikas	9

Ghana Raga kritis	...	...	...	8
Ramayana kritis	...	...	...	2
Bhagavata kriti	...	...	...	1
Dasavatara kriti	...	...	...	1
Kirtanas (including Canarese Compositions)			...	200
Mangalas ...	...	...	...	3
Tillanas ...	...	...	...	6
Hindi pieces	...	...	...	37

Apart from these musical compositions His Highness has written a book on the theory of music. It is in his own hand-writing and is preserved in the department of Oriental Manuscripts. The script looks more like *Grantha* than Malayalam.

The ease with which he composed was remarkable. He had a style of his own. He has covered a vast gamut, from very simple pieces to highly technical compositions which will baffle even a first rate musician. At the same time the diction of some of his compositions is simplicity itself.

It appears likely that some of the compositions of Thyagaraja had come to be known in Travancore also through the musicians who came to his court seeking his patronage. In some compositions there seems to be a very judicious blending of the styles of Thyagaraja and Muthuswami Dikshitar, but mostly his compositions stand out by themselves as a class. As an example of the Thyagaraja style we may mention the well-known kirtana in Bhairavi, "Bhavatiya". In compositions like "Rasa Vilasa" mastery of a very high order is in evidence, the fitting in of the swaras and the *solkattu* into the general theme is masterly. There are also compositions in which the rhythm, the idea and the sahitya are so aptly blended that one seems to echo the other two aspects. The kriti "Nrityati Nrityati" in Sankarabharanam is an example. We find also plenty of instances of Swarakshara i.e., letters of the Sahityam being

those of the notes corresponding to those letters. Though generally the words of the sahityas dominated the melody there are compositions like "Kalyaye Sree" in which the words merely hang on the melody like beads in a string. He has composed special slokas and kirtanas to be sung during the nine days of the Navaratri, particular pieces being ear-marked for particular days. In addition to these lyrical compositions, he composed three *Upakhyanas.* In these he was greatly influenced by Kokila Kantha Meruswami, (so-called on account of the sweetness of his voice). Meruswami settled in Travancore in 1833 and lived upto 1870. He introduced here the *sankeertana* style. As a result of this the Royal Composer has given us three upakhyanas, *Kuchelopakhyanam*, *Utsavaprabandham* and *Ajamilopakhyanam.* They contain, in addition to slokas, 33 kirtanas.

Among the varnas, the one in *Kapi* beginning with "Suma Sayaka" is well known and at the same time technically of a high order. It is understood that Vadivelu influenced to a very large extent the music of it.

Among the ragas used for his compositions occur some rare varieties. His composition "Dhanyoyam" in *Gopika Vasantam* has already attracted considerable notice. *Dwijavanti* is another raga in which there are very few compositions by others. *Lalitapanchamam*, *Desakshi*, *Sudda Bhairavi*, *Ghanta*, *Poorva Kambhoji*, *Mohana Kalyani*, *Navarasam* are some of the rare ragas in which he has composed songs. He has left behind him a legacy of musical treasure of which every Travancorean may be justly proud.

Over and above these compositions which had been published already several new compositions have been brought to light from manuscripts since discovered. There are several still unpublished which it is hoped will be made available soon. When these also come out and gain currency music lovers will realise what a rich and wonderful and

exquisite heritage has been left for us by the Royal Musician. Among the new pieces which are gaining currency several have already made their mark. Pieces like "Mamavasada" in Kanada, "Pahijagajjanani" in Vachaspati, "Rama Rama" in Simhendramadhyamam, "Viharamanasa" in Kapi, "Kripayapalaya" in Charukesi, "Sri Ramachandra" in Huseni, have won a unique place for themselves in the world of music.

It is a pity that his compositions did not become current; perhaps there were reasons for it. Most of his compositions being in Sanskrit could not probably catch the ears and imaginations of the people as easily as Tamil or Malayalam or Telugu. It is also possible that it struck a new distinctive electric note in the ears of the people dominated by the *Sopana* style and hence the general public found his compoisitions rather difficult to grasp. There was another important reason also. It is well-known that compositions of great musicians find currency mostly through their disciples. But, naturally in the case of Swati Tirunal there could be no *sishyaparampara*, be being a royal composer.

Thanks to the great interest which Their Highnesses the Maharaja and Maharani take in the cause of music, steps have been taken to popularise this musical treasure. A Summer School of Music for teaching these Kirtanas to the music teachers in the State was organised some years ago. This has now become a permanent institution providing for a four years' course in Carnatic Music. It is hoped that this institution will serve to bring out the greatness of Swathi Tirunal's music, attract people to appreciate his greatness and realise what a priceless treasure has been given to us by the Royal Composer.

The famous Govinda Marar was also a contemporary of Sri Swathi Tirunal Maharaja, but he seems to have gone out of Travancore seeking newer and wider fields. There is evidence to indicate that he was seen here in Travancore

by Parameswara Bhagavatar about the year 1831. On account of his capacity to sing musical pieces in six kalas (which means 32 times the original speed) he was called *Shatkala* Govinda. During his peregrinations he met the famous Thyagaraja in Tanjore District. He travelled wide and went to such distant places as Pandharpur and Benares. Subba Rao, who was Dewan to His Highness Swati Tirunal, was also a musician who could play Swarabat and Mridangam. Swati Tirunal is said to have learnt Swarabat from him.

The next period of musical importance was the reign of Ayilliam Tirunal Maharaja (1860-1880). Sri Ayilliam Tirunal was himself an accomplished singer. Musical experts of the day used to stand in great awe of His Highness. Most of the well-known figures in the musical world came to pay their respects to His Highness and get recognition from him. The famous Kalyana Krishna Bhagavatar, the veteran Parameswara Bhagavatar and his disciple, Coimbatore Raghava Aiyer (so called because he lived for a long time in Coimbatore though he was born in Vadasseri near Nagercoil) were the chief among those who adorned Ayilliam Tirunal's Court. There was practically no day on which there was not some kind of a musical concert at the Palace in which most of the musicians took part; very often His Highness himself used to take part in the performances to the wonder of those present. The famous Maha Vaidyanatha Aiyer came to his court twice. It was only on his second visit that he appears to have got recognition from His Highness's hands. Mahadeva Aiyer, a great violinist, also adorned the Royal Court at the time. Kalyanakrishna Bhagavatar and Mahadeva Aiyer lived on to the succeeding reign.

There has been an unbroken line of musicians attached to the Royal Court in Travancore and they had kept, some

times brightly and sometimes not so spectacularly, the torch of musical tradition down to the present time.

Now there is a great musical revival in Travancore as in every part of Southern India. Great impetus has been given to that movement by the remarkable interest which the Royal House at present is taking, among other things in the vivification and spreading of the musical culture of the State.

15. Sri Tyagaraja and Sri Śwati Tirunal

The period covering the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries is a unique period in the history of the Indian Music, especially in South India. In one sense we may say that the South Indian music of to-day is mainly the outcome of the musical upheaval which came about as the result of the contribution of the great musician-composers who flourished in that period; Thyagaraja, Syama Sastri and Muthuswami Dikshitar in Tanjore and Sri Swathi Thirunal in Travancore worked almost a miracle in the musical world. The western ghats were a real barrier to mutual intercourse between the east and the west coasts of South India in those times, but no earthly barrier could obstruct the cultural communion of great souls. I personally believe that the almost simultaneous appearance of these great personalities is not mere chance. In this world governed by laws (Natural or Divine) little that happens is by chance. There is a Great Purpose behind and our ineffective intellect, limited and handicapped as it is, is naturally incapable of understanding this Purpose. But that does not mean that the Purpose does not exist. We often find that at certain periods in the history of a nation some great souls are born and they give such a turn to the march of events that subsequent history moves altogether in an unexpected direction. It is also true in the case of great religious and cultural movements. It looks as if it was designed by Great Powers that these four great musician-composers

should be born about the same time so that a new and vibrant impulse may be given to the music of South India.

Among the trinity (as generally Thyagaraja, Syama Sastri and Dikshitar are called), Thyagaraja is unique; for variety, richness and prolific compositions he is unrivalled. It is not my purpose here to compare him with the other two of the trinity; I propose to refer to Thyagaraja and Sri Swati Tirunal. There is considerable similarity between these two composers. Both were intensely devoted to their family Deities. Sri Rama was no abstract God-head to Thyagaraja: to him He was a living friend, guide and philosopher in intimate contact with him, encouraging him and admonishing when necessary. The compositions of Thyagaraja are but the reactions of this relationship existing between him and Sri Rama. Similarly to Swati Tirunal Lord Padmanabha was an intimate Reality. The royal composer lived, breathed, sang and did everything but to please Sri Padmanabha. To serve the Lord was his goal. He was verily a Padmanabha Dasa. The cares and anxieties, worries and troubles of a reigning king sat lightly on his shoulders, because he discharged his duties as a servant of the Lord, in His name and for Him. Though he was a king he was in his heart of hearts a true ascetic, a real Vairagi. Both were proof against the temptations of earthly splendour and riches.

There are also some points of contrast between them which may also be referred to here. Thyagaraja composed in homely tongue which can be understood by general people, while the compositions of Sri Swati Tirunal are mostly in sonorous Sanskrit with its majestic flow. Also in the compositions of Sri Swati Tirunal there is a touch of the impersonal, as utter self-surrender to the Deity overshadowed every other expression of his devotion. In the case of Thyagaraja his personality is revealed in a mass of detail in his compositions. The various expressions of human

emotion, exhilaration, ecstasy, dejection, despair and various other phases of devotion abound in Thyagaraja's compositions. His intimate emotional reactions are revealed in many of his compositions.

Thyagaraja had the good fortune to have a sishya-parampara which carried on the traditions set by the master and this parampara is mainly responsible for the great popularity and wide circulation of his compositions. In the case of Sri Swati Tirunal, as he was a ruler, such a parampara was naturally impossible. This is one of the reasons why his compositions could not get that currency which one would have expected and which would also have been achieved had he not been a ruler. Thyagaraja lived a life of poverty. He shunned wealth even when offered. The only wealth he valued was the wealth of the devotion to Sri Rama. Sri Swati Tirunal on the other hand was a ruler but in his heart of hearts he was detached, and no earthly temptation had a place in his life.

It is really the good fortune of us here in Southern India that these two great saints who were also Divine bards were born. To them the musical world owes a great deal and every lover of music feels grateful to them.

16. Sri Tyagaraja the Mystic

All Paths to the attainment of the Supereme ultimately fall into two heads, which may be described as the Krama-mukti marga and the Sadyomukti marga; in other words. the Normal Path and the Special Path. These two may be compared to the well-made, smooth, slowly climbing cart-able road going up a hill to the top and to a short-cut, the bridal path, to reach the same top. On the former, people live a life of ordinary goodness following the normal rules of conduct and gradually work themselves towards the stage when they get illumination, while on the other path one hopes to achieve in a very short time what nor-

mally would take perhaps many aeons to accomplish on the other path. This is really the path of Yoga.

Even on this path there are two methods depending upon the temperament of the seeker for Reality; persons evolving on these two divisions may in a way be described as 'Occultists' and 'Mystics' or roughly *Jnanis* and *Bhaktas.* The occultist, so to say, has his face turned outwards. He studies the universe and equips himself to understand the basic truths beyond the phenomenon. The world to him is an expression of a Thought in the Mind of the Great Lord and he seeks to get at that Cosmic Mind by a study of its objective expression. The mystic on the other hand seeks the Reality within himself, more by feeling than by any analytical process. Herein lies the fundamental difference between the occultists and the mystics. Intellect and detachment play a greater part in the outlook of the occultists, while Love and emotional reactions form the basis of the mystic's efforts. Almost all the bhaktas in the real sense of the word are mystics.

There are essential differences between the mystic and the occultist in their outlook, their method and their reactions. As I have already mentioned the outlook of the occultist is more objective in the broader sense of the word, while to the mystic his inner reactions and feelings count everything; reasoning by the mental faculty has only a secondary place in the life of the mystic. What the occultist achieves by his reason, the mystic will do by intuition which, in some cases, lifts him to a stage far beyond what the occultist can hope for. The occultist is more impersonal in all his activities than the mystic who is intensely personal. While the former is dealing with abstract concepts the mystic finds his joy in dealing with concrete manifestations of those concepts. Naturally this tends to make the occultist apparently steady and balanced while the mystic allows

himself to be swayed by impulses and feelings. To the mystic God is not an abstract idea or a metaphysical concept; He is a Great person full of Love and Mercy. The mystic perceives Him as a friend, as a lover, as a beloved, as a guide, as a father, as a mother; in short he approaches God in all these relations; and when his feelings sway him he goes into ecstasies and forgets himself; in such moments he and his Beloved God alone exist in this universe. God is realised as the Great Lover of all that lives. This naturally leads to various reactions, and so in the writings or other expressions of mystics we find various moods portrayed. Sometimes he takes liberties with his God and finds fault with Him and even rebukes Him. At other times he is so full of joy that nothing else matters to him except to bathe all the time in that ocean of Ananda. At other times he considers himself as being unworthy of the Lord's attention. Because the mystic's emotional nature is always active, there is a tendency in him to be emotionally unstable: he may be irritable, he may appear a fanatic, he may even evince unbalanced sex life. These are only passing phases in the life of mystics.

In the case of Sri Thyagaraja a study of his compositions will clearly indicate that he was a mystic to the core. He lived but to please Sri Rama who was living Reality to him, a constant companion and a loving Guru. The glamour of earthly riches had no influence upon him. His one great sorrow was that people about him were not able to enjoy the bliss of Ramabhakthi, and were making themselves and others miserable. He often felt sorry for his uncongenial surroundings. The piece "Toline Jesina pooja phalamu" in *Suddha bhangala* is an example of this phase of the Saint's feeling. A true mystic that he was, he has had visions of Rama in various aspects and also several experiences with the Lord, and some of these are often referred to in his compositions.

" Alakalalladaga "	in	*Madhyamavati*
" Koluvamaregada "	in	*Todi*
" Yentabhagyamu "	in	*Saranga*
" Natimatamarachitivo "	in	*Devapriya*
" Chinnanade-na "	in	*Kalanidhi*
" Parithapamu "	in	*Manohari*
" Dasarathi "	in	*Todi*

As examples of his vision of Sri Rama as the supreme embodiment of all that is Good and Beautiful, as one to whom the heart flows out in love and rhapsody we may consider the following compositions :—

" Merusamana "	in	*Mayamalavagowla*
" Yentukoukalintura "	in	*Suddhadesi*
" Lavanya Rama "	in	*Poornashadjam*
" Ramabhirama "	in	*Durbar*
" Ninuvina namade-ndu "	in	*Navarasakannada*
" Sanitodi teve "	in	*Harikambhoji*

That he had also moments of great exhilaration is evident from the compositions like "Yetla terigitiva" in *Vasanta.*

When for a moment he lost touch with his Rama due perhaps to some emotional reaction he blames himself for it, in a mood of self-condemnation. The pieces

" Yetulabrotuvo "	in	*Chakravakam*
" Pahi Kalyana "	in	*Punnagavarali*
" Kaligiyunte "	in	*Keeravani*

are examples thereof.

As a bhakta he often takes liberty to rebuke Sri Rama for His neglect. The following pieces are illustrative of this reaction :

" Pariyasakama "	in	*Vanaspati*
" Entavedukondu '	in	*Saraswatimanohari*
" Sarivarilona "	in	*Bhinnashadjam*
" Neeke teliyaka "	in	*Anandabhairavi*
" Anyayamu Seyakura "	in	*Kapi*
" Chalamelara "	in	*Margahindolam*

In short, Thyagaraja was a typical mystic and with this background his life and his compositions reveal a great meaning and a high purpose. Apparent contradictions get reconciled and inexplicable incidents get explained, and we see the saint as an embodiment of emotional synthesis which leads to an Emotional Vision of the Great Reality.

17. Syama Sastri, the Oldest of the Musical Trinity

Syama Sastri, the oldest of the famous musical trinity of South India, was born at Tiruvarur (Panchanadikshetra, where the other two of the trinity also were born) in the year 1763, about four years earlier than Sri Thyagaraja. He belonged to the Tamil-speaking Vadama community of the Northern sect. His ancestors lived originally in Kurnool district and later on came to and settled in Kanchipuram. Tradition has it that Brahma the Creator Himself installed the Deity Kamakshi at Kanchipuram and Adi Sankaracharya installed this family to be in hereditary charge of worship in the temple.

After the fall of Vijayanagar in 1565 evil days fell on the family, but they kept their trust to be in charge of the deity Bangaru Kamakshi (so called because the idol was of gold) and left Kanchi for the south; they wandered for years through forests and strange places till finally they came to Udayarpalayam where they found temporary safety and stayed there for about seventy years. Internal dissensions, however, necessitated their leaving the place; they

moved further down, touching a few places on the way, till they came to Tiruvarur where they stayed for more than forty years. It was here that Syama Sastri was born. He was given the name Venkatasubramania as he was born in Krittiga Nakshatra. His pet name was, however, "Shyama Krishna" by which name he has been so well known. In his early years he had sound instruction in Telugu and Sanskrit; he learnt the fundamentals of music from an uncle of his who was not by any means a great musician. It is rather remarkable that none of the ancestors of Syama Sastri, paternal as well as maternal, were musicians. It was his *vasana*, inborn instinct, brought over evidently from previous births, that made him a great musician composer.

In his eighteenth year his family migrated to Tanjore consequent on the fear of invasion from Hyder Ali and sought the aid of the then Raja of Tanjore to ensure the safety of the idol of Kamakshi. Ultimately a temple was built for Kamakshi and lands were endowed for it as sarvamanyam. On the occasion of the installation ceremony the king also gave large free-hold estates to Syama Sastri's father. Thus Syama Sastri was above want.

As in the case of the other two of the trinity Syama Sastri also had, as it were, his initiation into the science and art of music at the hands of a great yogi, Sangita Swami who seems to have taught him, among other things the secrets of the science of laya. After his tutelage under Sangita Swami he was directed by the Swami to go to Pachemiriyam Adiappayya, the author of the immortal Varna *Viriboni* in Bhairavi raga. [This one composition is, in my view, enough to canonise him and build a temple for his worship.] Syama Sastri made rapid progress under Adiappayya and all his rare, inborn faculties flowered and developed into fullness, so much so that Adiappayya himself came to

regard "Kamakshi"—the pet name given to Syama Sastri by Adiappayya—as a divinely gifted genius.

In appearance he was striking and majestic. His commanding personality impressed everyone who came into contact with him. His diamond ear-rings, the gold mounted *rudraksham* on his neck, the bright-coloured shawl he usually wore and the striking kumkum mark on his forehead added to his impressive personality.

He was a great devotee like his compeers Thyagaraja and Dikshitar. His *Ishta devata* was Sri Kamakshi who was a living Presence and who even occasionally spoke to him. It is said that it was Syama Sastri who initiated Muthuswami Dikshitar into "Sri Vidya Upasana." As we know, Dikshitar was twelve years younger than Syama Sastri.

Syama Sastri's contribution to Karnatic music is unique. He had great mastery over the technique of the art; he commanded polished diction. His compositions are replete with ragabhava. He had given special charm and beauty to the raga *Anandabhairavi* and enriched it to a remarkable degree. Even his swarajathis are brimming with ragabhava; the swarajathis *Kamakshi anudinamu* in Bhairavi and *Kamakshini* in Yadukula-Kambhoji are scintillating masterpieces. He has illustrated how jathis in a tala can enhance the beauty of a piece e.g., *Sankari Samkuru* in Saveri, *Ninnu Vinaga* in Purvakalyani and *Himachala tanaya* in Anandabhairavi. [The last piece which ought to be sung in Aditala Misrajati is nowadays sung in simple Aditala, thereby taking away all the majesty and beauty of the composition.] He gave special prominence to Misra Chapu tala (or Triputa) and composed comparatively the largest number of songs in it. I once chose samples of the compositions of each of the trinity and worked out the proportion of songs in the more prominent talas. (The results are given in the chart above.) The percentage of Syama Sastri's compositions in Triputa (or Misra) preponderates.

It may be incidentally pointed out that the number 7 which gives the number of time units in Misrajati appears to have fundamental importance in Nature. In most of Nature's processes this number turns up at every turn as it were. We have seven days in the week; we have seven lokas, seven rishis, twice seven manas, seven colours in the spectrum, seven notes in the musical scale and so on. Certain diseases reach critical stages on the 7th, 14th, 21st, 28th days, all multiples of seven. It is no wonder 7 was considered a mystic number by our ancients. Many of our folk tunes (chindus, temmangus etc.,) which are a natural expression of the musical soul of the nation seem to be in Misra pattern. Kavadi chindus such as "*Bhoomi mechidum*," "*Chendil managar*," "*Palaivaykamakil*," and the popular Anandakalippu tune—"*Nandavanathil Orandi*"—are in this tala. Many of the devotional hymns lend themselves naturally to this tala pattern; very many of the well-known padas of Kshetrajna are in Triputa tala. There is something remarkable therefore about this tala. May it not be that because of the uniqueness of the number 7 that Syama Sastri gave that special prominence to Triputa tala?

Another distinctive contribution he made is that he gave shape and life to some rare ragas. Whoever can forget the subtle, unique charm of *Manji* raga after hearing "*Brovavamma*." *Kalgada* is another raga he handled. His kriti in *Chintamani* raga has a history of its own. In the reign of King Sarabhoji in Tanjore there was a renowned musician called Bobbili Kesavayya who had the title "*Bhuloka chapa chutti*" (implying that in his hand the whole world lay as a rolled mat). He went out to various places on a tour of musical contest, defeating the foremost musicians in all the places he visited. In due course he came to Tanjore. But the court musicians of the time felt unequal to any contest with Kesavayya and in one mind all of them considered Syama Sastri as the only person who

could save the reputation of Tanjore. Though he felt diffident at first, Syama Sastri finally agreed to the contest relying solely on Divine help. The whole of that night he spent in prayers to his goddess Kamakshi in her temple. It was there that he sang this kriti "*Devi brova samayamide*" in Chintamani raga. The story goes that at the open contest in the royal durbar next day he easily humbled Kesavayya in the latter's own special field of tana-singing. After this incident the reputation of Syama Sastri spread far and wide.

Another special feature of his compositions is the abundant use of *Swara sahityam*, chitta swaras and sahitya corresponding to them coming together in the same piece. He is also supposed to have left behind a book on *Layaprastara* and also charts illustrating possibilities in the field.

He did not compose numerous songs like Thyagaraja, not even as many as Dikshitar. He is supposed to have composed about 108 songs—some would put it at 300. In any case he is the least prolific in his musical output. What he composed were uniformly of a high order. He so fitted the sahitya to the tala that at every stage of the kriti the basic pattern of the tala was maintained. No one could mistake the tala at any stage. In some of the standard kritis we know that the tala pattern is not obvious at the start, unless the singer shows it by beats and waves as usual. For example, if one sings the kriti "*Telisi rama chintanato*" without indicating the tala, a listener who hears it for the first time might take the tala to be rupaka, so also in the Bhairavi raga kriti "*Sri Raghuvara sugunalaya.*" Such duality is not likely to occur in the case of the kritis of Syama Sastri.

He did not travel much; he visited only Pudukotta and Madurai. At Madurai he composed the *Navaratnamala* kritis on *Meenakshi*; the famous piece "*Saroja dala netri*" was one of them.

His compositions did not gain great currency. Even of the 108 pieces composed by him only a few are in current use e.g.

Kanaka saila	in Punnagavarali
Sankari samkuru	in Saveri
Ninnu vinagamari	in Purvakalyani
Birana varalichi	in Kalyani
Durusuga krupa	in Saveri
O Jagadamba	in Anandabhairavi
Mari vere gati	in Anandabhairavi
Saroja dala netri	in Sankarabharanam
Palinchu kamakshi	in Madhyamavati
Ninne namminanu	in Todi and
Brovavamma	in Manji

The reasons for this lack of popularity are obvious; he had not many disciples to spread his compositions; also the technique of the pieces was of a high order.

He passed away in 1827 in his 64th year. He is said to have predicted his end. He has left behind a treasure of musical gems of which any country may be justifiably proud.

18. Impersonal Art-form of Dikshitar's Music

It may look at the outset that there is some kind of contradiction in the wording of the title of this talk. Art is considered to be essentially a matter of personality; the artist cannot be divorced from his work, from his own art creation; the personality of the artist is stamped on and is revealed in every work of art that he creates. This is generally true; it is a matter of common experience that an art-connoisseur is able to fix the author of a piece of art work merely by looking at or hearing it. This can be easily explained. A work of real art is only the artist's mode of expression of his reaction to the phenomena which have impact on him from outside. An object, a person, an event or a scenery has to the artist a meaning more comprehensive, more significant and more permanent than to others. They are all only expressions,—however imperfect, faint or distorted of some great concepts in the cosmic mind; and the artist

attempts to sense those great concepts through their outer expressions down here. These are only gateways opening to a vision of the Reality behind; the artist senses this Reality in some mysterious, apparently vague, undefinable way. His imagination comes into play to a large extent. In this subjective laboratory of his imagination those outer expressions are put into the melting pot of intuition and he feels an urge to give out through his art the result of this process; he may not realise all this in his rational nature, because real art belongs to a region beyond the rationalising faculty, it belongs to a super-mental realm of existence. But the inner urge in the artist is what makes a real work of art. In this connection I am reminded of what a great art critic once said. When the critic was in Japan he happened to meet a great Japanese artist and asked him, partly in joke and partly in all seriousness, what it was that made him "waste" some good paper and pigments and produce what is called a "picture". The artist understood the question and, with a smile, answered the critic thus, "You see, I cannot tell you why I do it or how I do it. On a fine morning, when the sun is just rising, when I stand in a garden and see his golden rays filtering through the green foliage, when I see a young bird on a branch singing and dancing in utter self-forgetful joy, something happens within me, I seem to get into touch with something Infinite, something vast and boundless, and a pang swells up within me and I feel an urge to create something expressive of this inner experience, with the result that, as you say, I waste some paper and pigments and produce a picture, and I feel it is my, my own child, my special creation, my offering to the Infinite in which we live and move and have our being." These are significant words and reveal a great truth about art and artists. Art productions generally have on them the stamp of the artists who gave birth to them.

This is seen in every branch of art and particularly in music. Except in the cases where music is made to order, so to say, (as in the case of cinema songs, manufactured in dozens, in a machine-like manner, to suit the artists' limitations and the whims of the directors), music compositions of great artists have the stamp of the composers' personality on them to an unmistakable degree. The artists' inner reactions to outer stimuli, his temperamental peculiarities, his weaknesses and strong points can be seen to some extent in his art creations. It is often possible from a study of an artists' work to understand him and his general mental and emotional make-up, to size him up so to say. The human element, the personality of the artist colour and irradiate his work. Thyagarajaswami's compositions reveal, as in a mirror, his entire personality; his varying moods, his intimate mystic experiences are well revealed in his work; it seems possible to construct his entire personality by means of his compositions. The same is true, in varying degrees, of many other musicians, Syama Sastri, Jayadeva, Purandaradas and others. But in the case of Dikshitar's compositions there is a remarkable absence of this personal element. We may notice his scholarship, his mastery, his dexterity, his greatness in general. But all this is only in the surface; they do not reveal the soul, they do not tell us about his personal reactions, the inner workings of his mind and feeling. (By the way it may be remarked that in the case of Swati Tirunal also, there is this absence of personal element in his compositions.) We do not find among Dikshitar's krithis any pieces which correspond to *Palukuganta* or *Entugokalintura* or *Entudakinado* or *Choralademira* nor do we any pieces dealing with mystic experiences like *Alakalalla* or *Koluvamarakada* or *Natimata* or *Entabhagyama*. This absence of the personal element is revealed not only in the ideas

of the sahityams but in the musical form or mould of his kritis also. One striking characteristic of the personal element is that it colours, limits, at times even distorts the form of expression employed by the person. The moods of the personality influence the art expression. The same raga handled in different moods expresses itself in any one mood only partially, the extent of this incompleteness, this limitation depending on the person's reactions to these varying moods. I do not propose to go into details; a study of Thyagaraja's kritis will bear out this point. In the case of Dikshitar there is no trace of this incompleteness or deficiency or limitation or partial manifestation; the musical mould he adopts is complete, is all inclusive, is almost transcendental. This can be seen in every one of his pieces. The beginning phrases of the kritis are enough to reveal the raga in its entirety, its fulness; its essence, its uniqueness, its ramifications and its possibilities are all there. This faultless completeness is seen in the structure of the sahityam also and in the general framework which takes in the raga, sahitya and tala and makes a complete, virile, vibrant musical edifice. "Balagopala" in *Bhairavi*, "Sri Subrahmanyaya Namaste" in *Kambhoji*, "Akshayalinga vibho" in *Sankarabharanam*, "Sri Rajagopala" in *Saveri* are eternal monuments which will last through manvantaras and kalpas, because they are like great Archetypes in the Cosmic mind. If I were a fanatic, I should say that any phrase which is not used somewhere in "Sri Subrahmanyaya" cannot properly bring out the bhava of Kambhoji. So also in regard to the other kritis referred to.

One might ask, "How is it that the personality is so suppressed, had Dikshitar no human feelings, had he no psychic experiences, no emotional ecstasies and depressions?" Dikshitar was certainly human, intensely human. Did he not make effort to bring joy to his wife who was crazy about ornaments? Did he not feel grief when he heard of his

brother's death? He was human; but he sublimated his human personality, raised it to the level of the Impersonal and normally lived on this level. It was not that he ceased to be human, ceased to be personal, but he lived on a higher level of consciousness—which included and sublimated the personal and where the limitations and deficiencies of the human personality were transmuted into something all inclusive, into a great synthesis. This is the psychological explanation for the magnificent richness, all-embracing completeness and vibrant perfection of his musical compositions.

We often hear people speak of the low tempo, slow (almost languid) movement of his kritis and refer to this as a defect. In the first place, I should like to mention that there is no absolute standard for tempo or movement; it is obviously relative. We hear the same piece sung in different tempos by different people; on the veena the tempo is and ought to be relatively low, on the flute the tempo is higher, consciously or unconsciously. All this apart, what about the kritis like *Chintayamakandamoola* or *Brudannayaki* or *Ramachandram bhavayami* and above all *Vatapi Ganapatim* whose tempo can be as high as one might wish? Even in these pieces with comparatively quicker movement, we notice the characteristic completeness and perfection. This sublimation of the personal to the level of the impersonal in the realm of creative music is a rare achievement and perhaps Dikshitar is the one artist who did it so successfully. The true mark of this sublimation is the universality and synthesis so characteristic of Dikshitar's work. As Dr. R. Vaidyanatha Swami once remarked, "Dikshitar's music furnishes the fullest and the most integral manifestation of the values specific to Carnatic music.........Dikshitar's kritis are a condensed epitome of the spiritual record of India".

Another aspect of this impersonality may also be referred to here. The conception of Dikshitar's compositions

are not the result of ordinary mental processes, of thinking and building part by part in succession and then assembling the parts together to build the whole. He conceives the whole as one indivisible unit and gives entire form to it at one stroke as it were. It is this supramental faculty of intuition that is the dominant factor in his art creation. How tragic it is to see the depth to which some have now fallen from this height! We find now some one person writing the sahityam, another person setting it to some raga and perhaps another fixing the tala for it. Such stuff is spurious and a person with any degree of musical sensibility can easily recognise the spuriousness by the jar it produces on his aesthetic nature.

I do not want to refer now to the many-sided merits of Dikshitar's kritis, the excellence of the sahityam, the strict adherence to the rules of musical prosody, the appropriateness of the raga, tala and tempo used to express an idea and so on. These have been often explained in detail by competent savants. I would, however, refer to one unfortunate idea which was current sometime ago and which, I am glad, did not command much support. Some persons cannot feel happy unless they indulge in making comparisons between great men; leaving aside the question whether those critics are competent to make such comparisons, one cannot forget that such comparisons lead us nowhere. It used to be said that while the kritis of some great composers contain ideas and illustrations and didactic stories, Dikshitar's compositions are of the "Mam pahe" type, containing mostly invocations to various deities. This is true and it is on that account that they belong to a different plane altogether. A kriti is not necessarily the appropriate medium for giving moral or intellectual instruction, or for dilating upon abstruse philosophical topics or for narrating stories. If any one wants to do this, he may write a prose book or write verses, ahavals and kummis and please him-

self. As Christian Darnton has pointedly mentioned i. book "*You and music*", he may write a book but *not mu.* In Dikshitar's compositions such invocations have a deepe significance to students of mantra sastra, tantra sastra and yoga sastra, about which this is not the place to speak. They are simply the ways along which the inspired soul seeks and makes contact with the Oversoul in its multifarious manifestations.

I shall now close with a reference to another phase of this, what I may call, super-personal attitude. Individual prejudices and predilections have no place there. Whatever is good is absorbed and assimilated and built into the synthesis. In the wide impersonal world of Dikshitar's musical ideas there was room enough for English tunes and Hindustani rendering too. We often hear people disparage some artists by saying that they use too many Hindustani touches. I am one who is anxious that the purity of our Carnatic music should be preserved at all costs. I am anxious to guard it against the inroads that are insidiously being made into it by spurious art savants. I want the essential and unique features of our musical system to be kept intact. But our minds and hearts should always be open to new ideas and modes which can be fitted into our musical structure without sacrificing any of the essentials. It may be that some of these new ideas go a long way to enrich and enliven the system and put in also additional vitality. One should not shut out such naturally assimilable features. Such absorptions have been made provisionally in the past as the immortal history of India will tell. Dikshitar went to Benares with Chidambaranatha yogi and heard the North India style of singing also. I am inclined to believe that before Dikshitar went north *Hindolam* was generally sung with *chatusruti dhaivatam* as in the kriti *Manasuloni.* Dikshitar heard it sung with *Suddha Dhaivatam* and felt it could be advantageously absorbed into our system on account of its charm and

appeal. And he gave us the masterpiece *Nirajakshi Kamakshi* in Hindolam with *dha* flat. This must have caught the ears of ordinary listeners and savants as well. My own belief is that Thyagaraja himself, after hearing this, made his kriti "*Samajavara*" in this new form of *Hindolam.* It is quite possible that the Hindolam of "Manasuloni" is pre-"Neerajakshi", while that of the kriti "Samajavaragamana" is post-"Neerajakshi". (This fact may incidentally help us in fixing the date of Sangrahachudamani of Govindacharya who gives dha flat for Hindolam in his work.)

Such is the greatness of Dikshitar; he lived and moved and had his being in a world far beyond this mundane world; though living down here as an individual his soul was really in communion with the Universal Soul. His musical compositions reveal this phase in abundance. They are perfect models, faultless jewels, cosmic chords revealing for ever the Eternal Harmony. They transcend our petty ideas, our limited faculties, and roam as free larks in the realm of Pure Nada. One can also sense something of that Freedom, that Peace and Calm and that Impersonal Joy with the help of his unique compositions. May we be worthy of that privilege!

19. Purandaradasa

In a village near Poona there lived a well-known banker by the name of Vardappa Naik. To him a son was born in the year 1484 who was named Srinivasa Naik. It was he who later became the famous Purandaradasa. Purandaradasa, though he lived in Carnataka country and composed songs in Canarese was a Maratha by birth.

There is no figure in the history of Indian music more unique, more worthy of respect than this saint. He is generally called the grand-father of Carnatic music, and rightly so. Present day practice of Carnatic music is due entirely to him. It was he who fixed the Maya-malava gauda scale

for preliminary training, and to those who bestow a little thought over it, it will be obvious why this particular scale was chosen. It was he who prescribed the elementary lessons in music, such as Sarali varisai, Jantai varisai, gitam, alankaram, etc. He was a prolific composer and is believed to have composed more than 4,75,000 songs. About 8,000 of these are even now extant. It may be said that he set the form and standard for musical compositions. Later composers like Kshetrajna and Thyagaraja adopted the moulds set by Purandaradas. Of course the former improved on them, especially Thyagaraja who introduced many innovations. Purandaradasa's compositions cover a wide range from the simplest Bhajan songs to highly technical pieces. He used his songs as a medium for his work as God's messenger. He taught the scriptures, Puranas and Ithihasas through his songs. Many a moral precept was given through his music. His compositions abound in allegories, proverbs, and epigrams. He was the Divine bard singing the praise of God, of His Mercy and Love and Compassion and bringing Him nearer to the man in the street. He was so great that the very teacher under whom he received his initiation looked upon him as a greater saint than himself.

It is not proposed to give here a detailed sketch of his life. Born a rich man he improved upon his family wealth so much that he came to be called *Navakoti Narayana.* It is said that he was very greedy in his earlier years, amassing wealth by hook or crook, till almost the limit was reached. And then it was that it pleased God to turn him off from the *pravarti marga* to the path of return to the Divine. His ideal wife Saraswati Bai was the instrument through whom this change was brought about. The sinner became the saint. He gave up all his wealth and with his wife and children went about begging and earning just enough to feed their bodies daily. He reached Vijayanagar where the great Rajaguru Vyasaraya lived, and Purandaradasa who, as the rich

banker Srinivasa Naik, used to go to Vijayanagar in all pomp and glory, went there now as a mendicant seeking alms from those who would give them ungrudgingly. As the saying goes, the greater the sinner the greater the saint. Purandaradasa became the very embodiment of Bhakti. Obviously he had evolved spiritually to a high degree in previous incarnations and, in this life, had some Karma to work out which he did in the early part of his life as a greedy banker, till the shackles fell off and the clouds cleared and he had a vision of his true mission in life.

He travelled far and wide. He visited famous places and people flocked to see him and hear his enthralling songs. Wherever he went he was a centre of peace and goodwill. To him God was not a great entity sitting in a far off Heaven. He was here and now, a friend, a father, a mother, a brother, sympathising with his human failings, rebuking him where rebuke was necessary, but all the time lifting him to His Sacred Feet.

Many miracles are attributed to him. Allowing for possible exaggerations, certain incidents may be said to be authentic. Internal and external and contemporary testimonies point to this authenticity. His Ishtadevata was Sri Vittalaraya of Pandharpur and all his compositions are characterised by this mudra. In the temple at Pandharpur there is a dwajasthamba called *Dasarasthamba.* Pilgrims entering the temple worship this pillar first before entering the holy of holies. There is an anecdote connected with this. In Pandharpur there was a devadasi (singer and dancer of the temple) who was also a true devotee of Lord Vittala. One day the Lord Himself in the guise of Purandaradasa went to the dancer and desired to see her dance and hear her song. The dancer who was a great admirer of Purandaradasa as a devotee sang and danced, with self-forgetful devotion. Highly pleased with her performance the visitor presented her with a bracelet. Next morning it was found

that the bracelet of the image of Sri Vittala in the temple was missing and it came out that Purandaradasa had given it to the dancer. Inspite of his entreaties.Purandaradasa was dragged to the temple, tied to the post and flogged. At that moment a Voice was heard from the Inner Shrine saying that it was the Lord who disguised as Purandaradasa went to the dancer, because the dasa had some little karma to work out and by that apparent disgrace and flogging Purandaradasa had been completely cleared of all old karma and became a free soul, a *mukta*. The Lord also indicated his desire that that pillar should thereafter be considered a sanctified post and named *Dasarasthamba.*

He lived a full and rich life. He lived but to serve God as His children, the masses. He lived but to bring the Joy of God to the sorrowing world. He was a Divine Mediator interpreting God and His Joy to humanity and lifting the suffering humanity to the Bliss of God, and this he did through the medium of music. After his mission was over he returned to the feet of the Lord on Saturday, Pushyabaula Amavasa of the year Rakthakshi, corresponding to 1564.

20. Superstition in Music

Superstition is a seasoned sneak who can insidiously worm his wag into any field of human thought or activity. There is practically no department of human life where he does not rear his ugly head. And music is no exception. One of the basic causes which tend to perpetuate this sneak's exploits is mental inertia. As long as no urgent necessity arises to exercise the grey cells in my brain why not simply go along the line of least mental resistance, why not simply follow what X or Y or Z does irrespective of whether what he does is supported by reason or commonsense?

Superstition is generally defined as blind belief or action which has not the support of reason. Superstitious people

do a thing simply because other people do it or tradition demands it. The following story gives a striking picture of typical superstition.

A guru was living in an ashrama with his disciples. A sick cat one day strayed into the place and the guru tended it and brought it back to normal health. The cat became a pet of the hermitage and stayed there. As time went on it began to take liberties with the guru and started disturbing him when he was in meditation. So he tied it to his cot before sitting for meditation. All the disciples noticed it. In due course the guru passed away and the senior disciple took his place as the head of the ashrama. As time went by, tying the cat to the cot became an important item in meditation, and accent shifted from meditation proper to tying the cat. The cat died. As meditation cannot begin without the cat-tying item they got hold of another cat for the purpose. After sometime meditation reduced to tying the cat to a cot and nothing more. Every disciple got hold of a cat and meditation started and ended with tying the cat to a cot!!

The idea of superstition in music was forcibly brought home to me when I happened to attend a music competition at which there were two judges one of whom was a well-known musicologist and so dominated the show. The lady who was to me obviously the best singer did not get the first prize. I was greatly surprised. The musicologist judge was asked to say a few words at the end. He referred to a ragamalika sung by the best singer (who did not however get the prize) and said that it was not right to have used the raga *Saveri* as the last in the raga series, it being associated with the sentiment of sorrow and it was usual to finish with auspicious (mangala) ragas like *Sourashtra*, *Surati* or *Madhyamavali*. I was greatly amused to hear the savant indulging in such a fabric of fanciful assumptions, probably based on hearsay. For one thing his remarks show-

ed an utter confusion in the ideas of ragabhava and rasa. Also his assumptions are not acceptable at all. I wonder if he forgot or did not know that the song usually sung or played on nagaswaram at the most auspicious moment in a marriage or consummation ceremony in a South Indian household is in *Saveri raga*! So alas the ragas Sourashtra and Surati do not hold exclusive monopoly for the final auspicious point; we have several standard kritis in these ragas which have no relation to any mangala or auspiciousness. Because Shri Thyagaraja happened to compose one of the mangalams in Sourashtra this savant generalised that Sourashtra was an auspicious raga; and on a similar reasoning averred that Saveri was a sorrow-suggesting raga! What about the pieces "Ramabana" (Thyagaraja); "Sri Rajagopala" (Dikshitar), "Yentanerchina" (Pattanam Subramania Aiyar), "Yethanaisonnalum" (Padam)? They are all in Saveri, and evidentially they do not suggest or provoke the emotion of sorrow. This is clearly a case of superstition in music. I can give many parallel cases. *Mukhari* is generally called a "weeping" raga, simply because one or two compositions composed in it were suggestive of grief. But there are several compositions in mukhari, like "Yentanine varnintunu", "Sangita shastra", "Yelavatara" which are all in *Mukhari* but bear no relation to sorrow or grief.

Here is another striking example of superstition. Till a few years ago it was usual to begin a classical concert with the piece "Vatapiganapatim" in raga Hamsadhwani by Dikshitar. It had many advantages and set the right atmosphere at the beginning and was in praise of Ganapati, the remover of all obstacles. Hindus generally begin any important function with the worship of Ganesha. After sometime I noticed that some performers began their concerts with the kritis "Raghunayaka", "Sri Raghukula", "Manasukaruga", all in Hamsadhwani. I asked one of the musicians

why they did not begin with a piece on Sri Ganapati as per tradition. His answer simply floored me. He said that the intention was not to propitiate Ganapati but to begin with raga Hamsadhwani in which "Vatapiganapatim" was composed. Can superstition go further? So "meditation" became a matter of a cat being tied to a cot.

Take again the case of the unfortunate raga *Ahiri*. It is sincerely believed by some that if one sings it in the morning he will have to go without food the whole day. This superstition developed almost on the lines of the cat story given above. A musician tied his foodpacket to the end of a bent bamboo and started singing *Ahiri* raga. As the day got hot the bent bamboo straightened itself and the food packet went up high in the air and beyond possibility of being reached. So the man missed his lunch. From this solitary instance developed the superstition about *Ahiri* raga. Poor Ahiri !

Instances can be multiplied. What has been given is however enough. An unfortunate thing about these superstitions is that they find their way into text books used in institutions and successive batches of students accept them as facts and this tends to perpetuate such absurdities. It is time something is done to prevent such perpetuation of superstitions.

There are many other types of what may not seem to be superstition but are really superstitions *incognito*. Blind and unwarranted imitation of the mannerisms of the teacher by the disciple is probably based on the sub-conscious idea that these mannerisms make the merit of the teacher's music !

Lowering of the *adhara shruti* to an unwarranted extent is another type of what may be called para-superstition. A prominent musician had, on account of some physical trouble, to lower his *adhara shruti*, quite to a marked extent. And the modern witch, the mike, came agreeably to his rescue.

This led, I do not know why or how, to an implied idea that this lowering of the shruti was a privilege of top-rank artists. And so, one by one, the musicians started lowering their shrutis, even singers with gifted voices who can sing to 4-kattai shruti lowered their tonic note to 1-kattai or ½ kattai, and in some cases, as low as 6-kattai lower octave.

When we come to anecdotes about musicians there are a number of fertile brains which can manufacture all kinds of stories most effortlessly. Some of the anecdotes are certainly authentic, but there are many which can be traced to the imagination of some admirers. Mr. T. L. Venkatrama Aiyer, in a recent article, showed the utter impossibility of some of these stories being true. We must have heard the fantastic story explaining why Sri Thyagaraja did not compose pieces in Anandabhairavi — there is a view based on valid reasons that the solitary piece "Neka theliyaku" in Anandabhairavi, attributed to the saint, is not a composition of Thyagaraja. On the face of it the story does not ring true. There may be other reasons for his not handling *Anandabhairavi* or *Kuranji* or *Dwijavanti*, or even *Navroj*, except in a Divyanamakriti. Some people do not feel happy unless the lives of great people abound in fantastic occurrences; they mistakenly think that such stories (and miracles) add glamour to the lives of such great saints and sages. The truth is just the other way about. The greatness of Sri Thyagaraja stands rooted in his music and his unparalleled devotion to Sri Rama; he does not need any boosting up with stories and miracles.

Before closing I wish to refer to a very subtle, and hence dangerous, form of superstition. Some persons think that they are above any kind of superstition and so they look down upon anything which appears as superstition to them because they are not able to understand or find a rational basis for it. Such an attitude is in itself a form of

blind acceptance of their personal capacity to understand or explain, as the standard to judge whether a belief is superstition or not. Certain miraculous and hidden powers are attributed to music; some of these have been proved to be true. Psychological effects of music are profound; in recent years investigations have been carried on in the realm of musical therapy and they have revealed startling effects. Here are fields in which research may be carried on with beneficial results.

21. Karnatak Music—An Analysis

INTRODUCTORY

The beginnings of Indian music are lost in the mists of antiquity. There is evidence to show that this art had been developed to a very high degree of perfection even in very early times in the history of this country. All through historic and even pre-historic times music has been the cherished treasure of kings and noblemen of this land. Ancient cities were great centres of musical culture. All the famous musicians were attached to one court or another; some of our rulers were not only connoisseurs but were great musicians themselves. Travancore, Tanjore and Mysore were, and even now to some extent are, great musical centres.

THEORY OF INDIAN MUSIC

As far as the theoretical basis is concerned, there is very little difference between the North Indian and South Indian systems. Certain forms, modes of rendering and names vary, but the essential features are the same. As with every musical system, there are seven fundamental notes in the scale. The original scale was developed from the *Sama* chant. This is entirely different from the western Major scale. This was the original Suddha scale and corresponds to the modern Kharaharapriya raga of Karnatak music, (the *Kafi* scale of North Indian system). Starting

with these seven notes as basis all the required intervals of the scale were developed. For our practical purposes we use only twelve notes as in the west, but even these are slightly different from the corresponding notes of the western scale. The system of equal intervals (the chromatic scale of the west) is foreign to Indian classical music. The twelve notes with their names and the corresponding vibration-ratios are given below, along with the corresponding notes of the western scale:—

Shadja	C	1.000	1.000	1.000
Shuddha Rishabha	*Db*	*1.055*	*1.059*	*1.068*
Chatushruti Rishabha or Shudha Gandhara	D	1.125	1.122	1.125
Chatushruti Rishabha or Sadharana Gandhara	Eb	1.172	1.189	1.200
Antara Gandhara	E	1.250	1.260	1.265
Shuddha Madhyama	F	1.333	1.333	1.333
Prati Madhyama	R	1.406	1.414	1.423
Panchama	G	1.500	1.498	1.500
Shuddha Dhaivata	Ab	1.562	1.587	1.601
Chatushruti Dhaivata or Shuddha Nishada	A	1.667	1.682	1.687
Shatshruti Dhaivata or Kaishiki Nishada	Bb	1.778	1.782	1.801
Kakali Nishada	B	1.875	1.888	1.898
Shadja (Higher)	C	2.000	2.000	2.000

Over and above these 12 notes our classical treatises speak of 22 intervals* in the scale. These are not merely of theoretical interest but are actually used by experts in

(* See Note I).

Karnatak music. These minute intervals are not equal; they take three different values, 256/243, 25/24, 81/80, as occasion demands. Indian music without these short intervals will be wooden. It is the use of these very short intervals that makes the individuality of the Indian system. That is why it is so difficult to set Indian music to notation. The mere outline can be given in notation but the spirit of a composition or a melody-type is best expressed through the use of these minute divisions of the scale. The expertness of a musician depends to a large extent on his capacity to use them so as to add to the richness and sweetness of his songs.

RAGA: MELODY TYPE

The basis of Indian music is the Raga or melody-type, defined by Matanga as "that special combination of sounds beautified by colourful notes which charms the hearts of people". A scale is a theoretical concept and may or may not lend itself to be handled as a raga in the above sense. In a chosen scale, seven notes selected out of the 12 notes in the scale are used. The choice of these seven notes out of twelve under prescribed conditions gives 72 possibilities and thus we arrive at the 72 parent-scales enunciated by the great musicologist Venkatamakhi, whose scheme is generally followed at present. For purposes of mechanical codification, ragas or melodies are divided into two main groups: first the major or parent melodies (mela or janaka ragas) which take in regular sequence all the seven notes of a particular scale, both in ascent (arohana) and descent (avarohana), and then the derived melodies (janya ragas) which may omit some of the swaras or use some irregular (crooked) combinations of the swaras. While the possible number of parent scales is 72, there is no limit to the number of derived melodies.

Each raga is an entity with its own characteristic aesthetic expression; this aesthetic uniqueness of raga is

called its *bhava*. Bhava is the life of the raga, and a raga rendered without its appropriate bhava will be only a medley of sounds. Directions have been given as to how best the bhava of a raga can be expressed, what particular phrases bring it out prominently, what combinations are to be avoided, which particular notes are to be elongated and which slurred over and so on. These directions are based on actual experience and cannot be deviated from.

It might look that such directions hamper a musician and interfere with his originality and improvisation. In reality it is not so. Side by side with all such rules, there is almost an unlimited scope for improvisation and display of originality on the part of the musician. This is the unique character of Indian music. Take for instance the raga *Sankarabharana* (which corresponds to the Western major scale). Its notes are given, its characteristic phrases are given in classical reference pieces called *Varnas* (Varna means the colour or charm peculiar to the raga); one dare not take liberties with these prescribed rules. Yet, as we know, one can display all his originality, ingenuity and power of improvisation in elaborating that melody. We have heard of some great musicians who could elaborate a melody-type for days without any repetition or deviation from prescribed rules. Let me quote what Leopold Stokowski says on this matter :—

> "One of the great characteristics of the music of India to my mind is its flexibility and freedom. While giving due consideration to traditions stemming from the past, Indian music is free and improvised so that all powers of imagination in the musician are brought into play. In this way the music of India is always creative, never a reproduction of what is written or played, as sometimes happens with the music of Western Countries."

A musician can reveal his innermost soul in his music, forget himself in it and experience a great peace and calm; at such moments he feels something from on high pouring into and permeating him and he senses the bliss of creative art activity.

It must be mentioned here that these ragas are not themselves compositions; they are the bases on which all compositions are built. In one raga we may have any number of different compositions. The ragas themselves can be sung without any words at all, and in some cases a raga can be sung for hours together.

One of the most important features of Indian music is the use of graces (*Gamakas*, as they are called). It is these graces that give the life to Indian music. They are not accidental to our system but essential. All the short intervals which were mentioned above are used in this connection. Round every note of the 12 intervals scale are grouped some of these short intervals, and these are used in the graces. That is why it is so difficult to produce real Indian music in a harmonium or in any equal tempered instrument. About 10 gamakas are generally used, though there is no reason why an expert may not improvise more.

LAYA-TALA; TIME-MEASURE

It is said that *Shruti* is the mother and *Laya* the father of Indian Music. The ancient treatises give an elaborate account of different measures of musical time. We hear of 108, 700 and 175 kinds of *talas*. There was an old gentleman in Kilimanur (in Travancore) who was able to demonstrate all these 175 varieties. But of these only about five or six are in constant use. In South India, they are *Adi*, *Triputa*, *Ata*, *Jampa*, *Rupaka* and *Eka*. They consist of 8, 7, 14, 10, 6 and 4 equal intervals marked by counting fingers, striking of one hand over the other or waving off of the hand. We may represent them as follows :—

Adi	—	I O O O I X I X
Triputa	—	I O O I X I X
Ata	—	I O O O O I O O O O I X I X
Jampa	—	I O O O O O O I I X
Rupaka	—	I O O O I X
Eka	—	I O O O

I represents a beat of one hand over the other.
O represents counting with fingers.
X represents the waving off of the hand that beats.

All musical compositions other than those which are sung as *ragas* are set in particular *talas.* There is almost no limit to the varieties of compositions in the some *raga* and in the same *tala.* A very common feat performed by expert musicians to show their proficiency in *tala* is to sing the same piece in the same *tala* and so on.

The word *Laya* used in connection with music has generally two meanings; one general and literal, and the other technical. The obvious literal meaning is fusion or unison or coalescence. When the voice merges with the drone, we say that the singer has achieved *Laya* with the shruti. When our mind is entirely absorbed in anything we say that it is in a state of *Laya.* In this sense it is used in various contexts.

I propose to deal in this article with the special aspect of "*Laya*" considered as *Rhythm.* It is in this sense that we use the word laya as the basis of all talas. Rhythm is the basis of all activities in nature. From the movement of heavenly bodies in space to the gentle quiver of a blade of grass, all movement in nature is based on certain fundamental laws. Philosophers will say that rhythm is the basis of Divine manifestation and it is that basic rhythm which is symbolised in the Dance of Nataraja. In any case we cannot escape the fact that rhythm has profound influence on a sentient being. Regular ticking of a clock at times

induces languor and drowsiness; the regular sound produced by a moving train helps many to sleep. Rhythmic swaying of a swing lulls a child to sleep. It can be proved by mathematics that under certain conditions bridges can be broken and glasses shattered to pieces by the use of regulated movements or sounds. The effect of rhythm on human nature is more profound and one can work wonders by a judicious use of rhythm. In music, the *Tala* aspect is as important as, if not more important than, the *Raga* aspect. In fact, the evolution of music as an independent art was later; originally it was part of Dance. The old definition of sangita suggests that in the earliest stages, dance, song and instruments went together. The earliest treatise on music, Bharata's NATYASHASTRA, is a work on DANCE and only a few chapters are devoted to music proper. And in DANCE, the tala aspect dominates. In ancient India, the Dance art was widely studied and practised. When later on music began to develop as an independent art, this emphasis on the tala aspect was kept up, so much so that we, especially in South India, revel, as it were, in tala display. I have heard of a late Maharaja of Cochin who used to sit whole nights enjoying the play of drums only. Even today people going to ecstasies over a long-drawn-out-Mridangam-Kanjira-Ghatam display is a matter of common occurrence in the South. Even when there is no obvious tala display, a rhythmic background even to Raga alapana seems to provide a natural atmosphere. In our Nagaswaram performances, we know that when Raga alapana is going on, the 'tavil' (drum) is being played to some rhythm all the time. This is rather a remarkable phenomenon. Never for a moment does this tala background distract us from the employment of the Raga alapana; on the other hand, it seems in some way to enhance the effect of the Raga. No wonder then that in Karnatak music we lay so much emphasis on tala (or laya). Perhaps in no

other musical system in the world does tala (or time measure) assume such an important role or allow of such wide and intricate manipulation as in Karnatak music! Oh! what a variety of tala instruments have been in use and also associated with great saints and Devas! In some verses describing music we have references such as these: Prahlada handles the cymbals; Uddhava plays the tala instrument called Kamsya; Indra, the king of devas, plays Mridangam; Brahma, the Creator, and Prahlada keep time with cymbals; great ones like Nandi, Bhringi play varieties of drums, and all these keep in tune with the great Cosmic Dance of Nataraja!

Now I come to an important aspect of tala (or laya) which does not at present receive the attention it deserves. We speak of RAGABHAVA meaning thereby that which constitutes the essential aesthetic uniqueness of the Raga. Ragabhava is entirely different from Rasa which is closely related to human emotions. The Bhava of a Raga may cover a variety of Rasas. But we know that a real Raga has its own Bhava. So also a tala has its own Bhava, that is, its own characteristic aesthetic response. People often neglect this Tala-bhava. Various types of talas have varying aesthetic effects. Nay, changes of tempo in a tala may bring about a change in its bhava. It is a matter of common experience that a medium tempo tala if used in very slow tempo, produces a remarkably different aesthetic reaction. In North Indian music, they recognise this possibility even in ragas. A particular set of swara phases which bring out the bhava of a raga, begins to reveal the bhava of another raga if sung in a slower tempo. It is a well-known fact that elongation or contraction of a note in a raga may change its bhava altogether. What does this mean? It means that time element has a great effect on the bhava of a musical phase. This aspect of tala is fully exploited in our classical Dance Art. This is generally referred to as *Kala-pramana* which

means the tempo suitable to the purpose in view. In any musical composition the balancing of the sahitya, the raga. the tala and the kalapramana of the piece is of paramount importance. Every piece has its own kalapramana; some are Madhyamakala kritis, which means that medium tempo is best suited to it; similarly, we hear of Vilambhakala kritis and Duritakala pieces. If a Madhyamakala piece is sung in Vilambhakala, it would not be so effective as when sung in its appropriate kala.

Kalapramana also depends to some extent on the nature of the voice as also on the nature of the instrument. Veena requires a slight lowering of the tempo while flute needs some speeding up for producing the adequate effect. To play a Madhyamakala piece on the flute in a long-drawn-out tempo, is to commit aesthetic mutilation of the piece. So also in some voices, some comparative speeding up may be needed for effect, while some voices shine best if the speed is slightly slackened.

Correct determination of the kalapramana of a piece having in mind all these aspects of the matter, will help considerably in getting the best out of the piece. Thus we see what an important part LAYA (tala) plays in our musical system.

MUSICAL PIECES

(1) The *raga alapana* is the most important aspect of Indian music. A *raga* is sung without any words at all; at times some verses are also sung in ragas without *tala*.

(2) *Pallavi* is the next in importance, and expertness in it makes the real musician. A few words—almost like an aphorism—are chosen and sung in a particular *raga* and in a particular *tala* (at different speeds). All kinds of combinations of the notes of that *raga* are allowed, provided the aphorism begins at the same point in the *tala* range.

(3) Then come the *Kirtanas*, classical devotional songs, composed by famous musicians. Though the whole theme is

set by the composer, singers introduce their own variations within the limits allowed by the compositions.

(4) Then we have the *Padas* and the *Javalis* which are usually erotic compositions. They are generally looked upon as the out-pouring of the human soul in ecstatic love towards the Divine.

(5) The *Tillana* is another variety. This is a composition like *Javali* or *Kirtana*, but without words. Certain combinations of sounds alone are used, such as *tadhim*, *nadridhim*, *tom* and so on.

(6) *Varnas*, *Gitas*, *Alankaras*, *Swarajatis* and so on are technical compositions intended to train the voice and give a sound basis for musical knowledge.

DRAVIDIAN SONGS

A very old system of music seems to have existed in the South even before the Aryanisation of South India. It has been slowly absorbed into the Aryan system. *Tevaram*, *Tiruvachagam*, *Tiruppugazh*, and *Tiruvaimozhi* are the more serious of the Dravidian compositions, *Kavudichindus*, *Temmangus* and *Kummis* being the lighter ones.

FOLK MUSIC

Folk music of a nation is a natural expression of the mass soul of the people making the nation. In fact any national art is, or at any rate ought to be a true expression of the cultural soul of the nation. And music being the highest of the fine arts is the best and most vital expression of the nation's soul. While the higher and more elaborate musical expressions correspond to the higher and more intellectual section of the people, folk music expresses effectively and in simple, direct and straight-forward manner the emotional experience of the general population. I have heard it said by people who have travelled wide that, while there is marked difference between the various kinds of musical techniques obtaining in different parts of the world, there

is a sort of similarity in folk music all over the world. This is but natural as the basic impulses of humanity are similar all the world over. It is only in the sophisticated conventional society that a lot of artificial differences become manifest.

In India, especially, where music has played an important part in the day-to-day life of the nation, folk music is inextricably woven into the life of the people. Indian people are essentially a musical people. They use music for almost every function in life; whether it is a religious ceremony or a social function or an agricultural pursuit they do not hesitate to use music to lighten their hearts and make their burden less heavy. They have a song for harvest, another for lifting water, and yet a third for loading a van and so on. In temples and on marriage occasions music is an indispensable factor. A train-motor collision occurs in the morning; by noon the incident is set to music and printed as a leaflet, and in the afternoon it is sold in the trains and buses. This is a common phenomenon in South India.

Here music has always been recognised as handmaid of religion and a help for the realisation of the Supreme. In such a country it is no wonder that music is used freely for every possible purpose, in villages, in the paddy fields, in work houses and so on.

Several varieties of these folk songs are found all over Southern India, especially in the Tamil districts. The most important of these are Kummi, Thambangu, Tappa. Lavani and Chindu with several varieties like Vazhinadaichinthu, Nondichinthu, Kavadichinthu, etc. Of these the Kavadichinthu (so called on account of its association with the carrying of Kavadi by the devotees on their shoulders) has attained great popularity and importance among the folk songs for various reasons. It has an intrinsic musical charm of its own; it depicts the universal longing of the human

soul for union with the object of its devotion, the Nayaka-Nayaki bhava bhakti which is the background of all devotional literature—the Deity in this case being Lord Subramania, the most popular Deity in Tamil Nad. (Tradition has it that it was Lord Subramania who gave us the *muttamil*, Iyal, Isai and Nataka (literature, music and dance-drama).

Annamalai Reddiar—blessed be his memory—the famous author of Kavadichindu has laid the Tamil Nad under a deep debt of obligation by his great gift of the Kavadichindu which is classical in its theme, diction and rendering.

There are also other varieties of folk-songs which convey moral and philosophical truths, teach proverbs and narrate historical events and so on.

One striking act which emerges from a study of the folk songs is that, while the tunes may not conform to the rules of Lakshana, they are not lacking in aesthetic quality; on the other hand it almost looks as if their very charm and beauty are the result of this apparent disregard of the requirements of technique.

PERFORMANCES

1. First we have the *Classical* performance of an expert musician in which stress is laid on the technical side of music.

The general structure of the programme of a typical Music Concert in the South is significant. It generally begins with a *Varna* (a technical piece whose entire form has already been fixed by the composer and in which the singer is not expected to do anything on his own). Then follow a number of kritis, also composed by great musicians; here the singer has freedom to add his own decoration and ornamentation within the limits set by the composer. Then comes the climatic part of the programme, Ragalapana and Pallavi, where the singer is free to improvise and reveal his creative faculty. The programme generally ends with

some miscellaneous pieces which include devotional songs. In this arrangement we have an epitome of the growth of the human soul towards perfection. At first he follows rigidly the rules of conduct laid down by more evolved persons. He then takes himself in hand and tries to adapt the rules to changing conditions and varying degrees of response to higher impulses. Finally he becomes completely free, a true mukta, who in turn makes his own laws and laws for others to follow. He creates his own world of music and revels in it.

2. *Bhajana* in which simple devotional songs are sung in groups, experts as well as laymen, is very common in the South.

3. *Kathakalakshepam* (musical story telling) is a very popular and useful institution. It is a matter for deep regret that this institution is going out of fashion nowadays. It is the duty of every serious-minded person to see that it is restored to its proper place. We have also the *purana-patanam*, which is prose story-telling with a musical background.

4. In India music has always been associated with the *stage*. *Drama* as distinct from *Opera* was still recently almost foreign to us here.

5. *Dance* is another important institution in which music plays a very important part. In fact, as has been said, the Dance art developed earlier and comprised music as a component part; only latterly music developed as an independent art.

6. *Orchestra**, as is understood in the west, is entirely alien to Indian music, whose basis is the raga based on a succession of notes and not, as in the case of harmony, on the simultaneous sounding of several notes. Harmony is the antithesis of melody. But we have had in ancient times what we may call *melodic orchestras* in which a number of instru-

(* See Note II).

ments were used and several singers also took part. They were called *Vrindas.* I would suggest that this word Vrinda may be used in Indian music instead of *orchestra,* so as to avoid possible misunderstanding.

SOME OUTSTANDING FIGURES IN MUSIC

Bharata, author of the famous "Natya Sastra", is perhaps the earliest known musicologist. Matanga, Parswadeva, Narada, Sarngadeva, Ramamatya, Somanatha, Venkatamakhi (author of the treatise "Chaturdandiprakasika"), Ahobala, Tulajaji are among the prominent lakshanakartas. Among the composers in the South, Talapakkam Chinnayya, Purandaradas, Narayanatirtha, Kshetrajna, Sadasiva Brahmendra, Margadarsi Sesha Iyengar (who is referred to by Maharaja Swati Tirunal as providing the model basis for his own compositions), Pachamiriyam Adiappayya and Gurumurti Sastri stand out prominently in the pre-Thyagaraja period. The famous Trinity, Thyagaraja, Shyama Sastri and Muthuswami Dikshitar flooded the whole of South India with their brilliant and heart-moving lyrical compositions. Swati Tirunal was another brilliant composer, almost contemporary to the Trinity. Among other composers may be mentioned Arunachala Kavi, Anayya, Gopalakrishna Bharati, Muthu Thandavar, Subbaraya Sastri, Kavi Kunjara Bharati, Mysore Sadasiva Rao, Tanjore Ponnayya, Karur Dakshinamurti Sastri, Sabhapati Iyer, Tachur Singaracharulu, Tiruvottiyoor Thyagarajaiyer, Pattanam Subrahmania Iyer, Ramnad Srinivasa Iyengar and others. Among the living composers two stand out as striking personalities. Mysore Vasudevacharya, the 93 years old veteran, is happily amongst us and is still composing and also giving training to deserving disciples. Kalakshetra where he is now doing his service to Goddess Sarasvati may be justly proud of him. The other composer whose songs have moved and are still moving the hearts

of many is Papánasam Sivan. It is my belief that after Thyagaraja few have achieved such a standard of lyrical beauty, musical excellence and spontaneous aesthetic appeal.

Among the performing musicians of the present day, who have achieved eminence, may be mentioned Ariakudi Ramanuja Iyengar, Musiri Subramania Iyer, Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, Madurai Mani Iyer, G. N. Balasubrahmaniam. M. S. Subbulaxmi, D. K. Pattammal, Karaikudi Sambasiva Iyer (Veena), Palghat Mani Iyer (Mridangam), Nagaswaram Veeruswami Pillai, Nagaswaram Tiruvizhimazhalai Brothers, Mysore Doraiswami Iyengar (Veena), Devakottai Narayana Iyengar (Veena), Palni Subrahmania Pillai (Mridangam), Papa Venkataramiah (Violin), Kumbakonam Rajamanikkam Pillai (Violin), Kalyanakrishna Bhagavatar (Vocal and Veena), Tiruvalangadu Sundaresa Iyer (Violin), T. N. Krishnan (Violin), Lalgudi Jayaraman (Violin) and Umayalpuram Kodandarama Iyer (Ghatam and Mridángam).

This list is obviously not full, nor does it suggest any preference. At best it is only a sort of random selection.

Some South Indian musicians specialised in particular ragas and on that account came to be called after their special ragas; as for example, Todi Sitaramayya, Begada Subramania Aiyar, Kedaragowla Narasimhachariar and so on.

INSTRUMENTS

Hundreds of musical instruments are mentioned in our ancient works. The popular ones, however, current at present in the South are Vina, Violin, Gotuvadyam, Mukhavina, Flute, Nagaswaram, Mridangam, Tabala, Tavil, Jalatarangam, Kanjira and Ghatam. Most of these are used as accompaniments, but some of these like Vina, Flute, Nagaswaram and Gotuvadyam play the leading part in concerts. The Vina stands unique and is unrivalled for richness, delicacy and sweetness. The Violin, though a comparatively new instru-

ment, has been accepted as one of our avowedly important instruments, almost indispensable to concerts in South India.

It may be mentioned here that Indian music is based entirely on human voice. All compositions are confined to the range of human voice and so they range only in three octaves—not even over the entire range of three octaves; the actual range works out only to about two octaves, i.e., the middle octave (madhyasthayi), about half of the lower (mandarasthayi) and half of the higher (tarasthayi) octaves. Instruments only follow the voice and even when they are played solo they re-produce only vocal music.

SOME UNRECOGNISED ASPECTS

Music was recognised as having wider and deeper influences than are obvious. The effect of music on human emotions was studied carefully and relations established between some ragas and some typical emotions. Our ancient scholars and teachers have always recognised this inner, subtler and deeper aspect of music. It can calm a troubled mind and bring it peace; it can quieten a restless child and lull it to sleep; it can even subdue wild animals and serpents; it can cure certain types of physical and emotional ills. In a recent article under the title "Doctors now use Musical Therapy" I read a number of cases in which famous physicians and surgeons used music with great success in their work. Certain ragas were associated with certain periods of the day and also with certain seasons of the year.

Miraculous powers have also been attributed to music; it is believed that some ragas can cause rain and others fire and so on. Actual occurrences of such phenomena have also been recorded. The power of music to cure mental and physical disorders has been recognised; here is an interesting and useful field of research.

Above all, there is something inherently noble, beautiful and spiritual about Indian music. There can be no enjoyment more impersonal and sublimating than what it offers. It

prepares our very soul for something higher. While we are under its influence, our nature is open to higher influences. It is at such moments that we get glimpses of Divinity.

Indian music never loses sight of this high purpose—the realisation of Divine Bliss through beauty of sound. All the ramifications of the system are developed with this end in view. Indian music is not meant just to give a pleasurable sensation to the ear and stop there. Of course it pleases the ear, but that is only the first step. The vibrations in the air which cause this titillation in the ear set up corresponding vibrations in our nature; our emotions are affected; our mind is also influenced; even the vital currents in our body are affected by these vibrations. In the memorable words of the Chinese author Ya Ki:

> "...............When the spirit of conformity manifests itself, harmonious music appears..............under the effect of good music, the fine social duties are without admixture, the eyes and the ears are clear, the blood and the vital spirits are balanced, habits are reformed, customs are improved, the Empire is in complete peace."

As a nation has its own characteristic musical expression, one should be wary of introducing any new style in the musical system of that nation. Anything which goes counter to the basic culture of the nation should be discarded. Minor changes are of course inevitable; human society changes and new modes of living and feeling arise, but all this should fit in with the characteristic spirit and culture of the nation. That was why Plato warned people against changing the established musical style of a nation lest such a change should affect the very life of the nation and its established ideals. India has a great future and its music has also a great future; let us see to it that this future is not marred by any acts of commission or omission on our part.

In conclusion, I should like to make one suggestion. The Sangita Nataka Akademi which is making laudable efforts to help all phases of Culture in the country, will do well to organise an Annual Festival of Karnatak Music, in co-operation with other music institutions in the south. In such festivals opportunities may be afforded for the best exponents to be heard by all who like to hear them and also for rising artists to reveal their hidden talents to the music-loving public. Also recitals by North Indian musical experts should be arranged so as to give opportunity for mutual understanding and appreciation between the North and the South. After all Indian Music is essentially one unique system, only rendering varies in the North and the South. These two different styles of rendering only go to enrich the musical culture of the nation.

NOTE I

The names and the vibration ratios of the 22 intervals in the scale.

Sl. No.	Name.	Ratio
1.	Shadja	1
2.	Ekasruti Rishabha	256/243
3.	Dvisruthi Rishabha	16/15
4.	Trisruti Rishabha or Suddha Rishabha	10/9
5.	Chatusruti Rishabha	9/8
6.	Suddha Gandhara	
7.	Sadharana Gandhara	6/5
8.	Antara Gandhara	
9.	Chyutamadhyama	5/4
	Gandhara	81/64
10.	Suddha Madhyama	4/3
11.	Tivra Madhyama	45/32

Note:—
1. The name adopted here are those with regard to which there is greatest agreement.
2. The ratios are (70 cents) and more or less derived from the directions given by Ahobala.

12.	Prati Madhyama	64/45
13.	Chyutapanchama Madhyama	40/27
14.	Panchama	3/2
15.	Ekasruti Dhaivata	128/81
16.	Dvisruti Dhaivata	8/5
17.	Trisruti Dhaivata or Suddha Dhaivata	5/3
18.	Chatusruti Dhaivata	27/16
19.	Suddha Nishada	16/9
20.	Kaisiki Nishada	9/5
21.	Kakali Nishada	15/8
22.	Chyutashadja Nishada	243/128
23.	Tara Shudja	2

3. A careful study of Bharatha's Natya Sastra indicates that he recognised three different kinds of Ekasruti (micro-tone) of values: (90 cents. $\frac{256}{243}$ $\frac{25}{24}$ (22 cents).. $\frac{81}{80}$ (22 cents).

4. Chyutapanchama madhyama (40/27) is the Panchama of Ma-Grama.

Note II

It is possible that in earliest times in the history of Indian music the ideas of harmony and melody were both current. There are references in ancient Tamil literature to attempts at harmonisation. But subsequently they must have come to what might be called the parting of the ways. They must have found that harmony and melody could not co-exist and so they had to choose between them. As by then the raga concept had taken root (being in line with the characteristic Indian temperament, which is essentially individualistic), harmony had to be given up and melody began to hold the entire field.

Part II

OTHER ARTS

22. Basic Principles of Indian Art

Art is one of those ideas which evade clear definition. Being abstract in its nature it does not lend itself to being expressed in concrete things which our logical mind can easily grasp. All the same, several definitions have been given, each having a bearing on some special aspect of Culture in its most general sense. Goethe called it "the magic of the soul", Schiller thought of it as that "which gives man his lost dignity". To Carlyle it is "the dis-imprisoned soul of fact". He also says, "In all true works of art wilt thou discern Eternity looking through time, the Godlike rendered visible". Wagner defines it in various ways: "The pleasure one takes in being what he is", "The highest manifestation of the communal life in man", "The accomplishment of our desire to find ourselves again among the phenomena of the external world", and so on. Another thinker looks upon it as "a way of hastening our growth by vicariously acquiring experiences". Dr. Ananda Coomaraswami considers the artist not as "one who makes but one who finds". A. Clutton Brock puts it in a very striking way when he says "When all the knowledge, skill and passion of mankind are poured into an acknowledgment of something greater than themselves, then that acknowledgment is Art". Of course Art is all this, but it is also much more; it is the essence of Life, a way of revelation of Life and its meaning, an expression of the "soul of fact", to use Carlyle's phrase.

Art in India has always been considered a path of realisation of the Ultimate Reality. It is spiritual in its outlook, idealistic in expression and sublime in interpretation. It is not merely a matter of sensuous enjoyment, not a luxury to be enjoyed by the leisured rich class of people or zamindars or state rulers. not something to amuse oneself with.

It has a deeper basis and a more exalted aim. It was considered to be as vital for human progress as Devotion or Knowledge or Love. God was considered to be the fountain of all Beauty as He was considered to be the source of all Knowledge, Power and Wisdom. Just as people try to reach Godhead (or at least get a glimpse thereof) through the Path of Knowledge or the Path of Devotion, so through Art some people attempt to sense Divinity. God is not only omniscient and omnipotent, He is also all-beautiful. Plato described the Divine Trinity as the Good, the True and the Beautiful. How can there be any beauty down here but for the Beauty of God. Every object of beauty in this world, whether it be beauty of sound, beauty of form, beauty of colour, beauty of pose, or beauty of rhythm, is but a shadow, however faint, of the Beauty that is of God. Why does a glorious sunset rouse in us a feeling of joy? Because we sense something of the Beauty of God in that sunset. So also the small rippling stream meandering through shady groves of fruit-laden trees, the green mountain slopes from which shoot up here and there gigantic trees, the enchanting multihued rainbow shining in the eastern sky on a rainy afternoon, the gentle cooing of the cuckoo as well as the soul-stirring music of the gifted expert, the majestic gait of the proud royal elephant as well as the mirthful leap of the nimble antelope—all these reveal to us something of the Beauty of God and hence are objects of joy. A thing of beauty is verily a joy for ever, for through it God reveals to us something of His Love and Joy, His Ananda. Beautiful objects are, as it were, so many doors through which we can peep into the infinitely sublime Beauty of the Creator. The more we admire and love and delight in loving them the more we can sense the Divine. He who is all Bliss reveals something of His Bliss to all who see in Beauty a Divine quality. God as Absolute Beauty is one of the basic ideas of Ancient Hindu Culture. Rukmini addresses

Shri Krishna as *Bhuvana Sundara* (the most beautiful in the universe), Madhusoodana Saraswati, the great advaitic scholar, described Shri Krishna as *Soundaryasarasarvaswa* (the entire essence of Beauty). But for His Beauty how can there be anything beautiful in creation? Love of Beauty in the abstract is one of the most effective weapons with which to fight the attractions of the lower world.

The artist tries to bring Godhead nearer to us by working along the line of the Beauty-aspect of God. Man is a miniature God, he has in himself potentially all the Divine faculties. He may have only a little knowledge now, but he will become a great knower in due course; he may have only a little love at present, but at some future date he will be capable of infinite Love. Every aspect of Divinity has its counterpart in man and man can reach Divinity by developing and sublimating one or other of these aspects in him. Artists, by developing the creative aspect in themselves, try to reveal to us something of God's Beauty down here.

So, art is verily a path to the Supreme; it is a Yoga, Soundarya Yoga, so to say. Artists are, at any rate ought to be, great yogis in their own way. Great Rishis and Devas have been great artists; the authorship of some of our art traditions is traced to great sages. The very names given to some of the Deities show how much emphasis was laid upon this aspect of Art. *Nataraja* is the *arch-dancer*, *Ranganatha* means the *stage manager*. All art expressions in India had a spiritual background.

In ancient India Art went hand in hand with Religion. In one sense we may say, Art turned inward is Religion and Religion turned outward is Art. Temples have been repositories of all arts; they have enshrined not only idols of deities but art treasures as well. The architecture of some

of our temples dazzles us, some works of sculpture amaze us with their exquisite beauty. Why? They are not the work of ordinary masons and carpenters, they are the work of great *bhaktas* in whom the love of God welled up and found expression in such work; they lived but to serve God, they effaced themselves in their work of love, they did not care to be known to posterity as great artists, their work was anonymous; the only thing that mattered to them was the offering they made to the Lord in the form of such art treasures. These great works of art were not made to order so to say; they came as a result of a deep inner urge and hence their unique greatness. This is the uniqueness of Indian Art.

We have heard of the great Haridas Swami, the teacher of Tansen of the court of Akbar. Once Akbar asked Tansen what was the secret of the unique charm of his music; and Tansen said, "Sire, what is my music when compared to the music of my master, Haridas Swami.!" Akbar was greatly intrigued to hear this and urged Tansen to take him to the Swami and after much persuasion Akbar was taken to the ashrama of Haridas. Tansen had warned the Emperor already not to expect the Swami to sing but of his own accord. They waited till the mood came to him one day and the Swami sang. Was it mere song? No! It was a new revelation. Akbar felt lifted out of his mundane world and borne on the wings of Eternity to realms of sheer Beauty, Charm, Peace and Bliss. Turning to Tansen he said, "I never knew that there could be such music. I thought yours was the limit of perfection. But by the side of this music yours appears lifeless and empty. How is it that having learnt at his feet you have not caught the soul of his art?" Tansen smiled and said, "I can never sing like my master, it is true that I learnt the art from him; I might have mastered the technicalities of the art, but there is this difference. I sing to your bidding but my master sings to no man's bidding.

he sings when the urge comes from inside and that makes all the difference."

To the artist the outer world of phenomena is but a reflection of Divine Thought and he tries to get at that Thought by the contemplation of its reflection down here. The outer expression has a meaning only in so far as it reflects some idea behind; this idea is more significant to the artist than its outer expression. He wants to understand things not as they seem but as they really are. So to the artist the phenomenal world is only a means to enable him to get at the noumenal world behind; to him objects and events have a new meaning; they have a message for him and it is this message that he tries to give through his art creations. Like the old duke in Shakespeare's "As you like it", the artist finds "tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones and good (may I add truth and beauty) in everything." To the artist:

> "A careless shoe-string in whose tie
>
> I see a wild civility
>
> Doth more bewitch me than when Art
>
> Is too precise in every part."

Thus we see why Indian art has been Idealistic and Symbolic rather than realistic. To the Indian artist art is not an imitator, is not reproducer, it is on the other hand a creator, an interpreter. The so-called "realism" in art is foreign to Indian art expression. A work of art is to him an expression of one's experience. It is also a universal language of deep human emotions. It must express some of the great realities of life. It must be a symbol of some of the ever-lasting principles which sustain the world. This we shall see best when we take Indian painting or Indian sculpture. The Indian painter gives only second place to

realistic reproduction. If he paints a person he paints not only that person but the type to which that person belongs, not only a passing mood but the real character of the person, and he attempts to express through that painting what God wants to express through that individual. And so it is the combination of what that person is at the moment, what the person generally is and what God wants him to be. If it is merely a question of reproducing that person on a piece of canvas or paper, we do not require a great painter for it; a photographic plate will do the trick. Why then do we go in for great artists to give us great works of painting? It is because of this essential difference between mere imitation and purposeful creative expression. Great artists deal primarily with types and only secondarily with individuals belonging to that type. Type, rather arche-type. is the common idea behind all the individuals of that type. We often deal in our minds only with these types. And only in trying to visualise mentally we come down from the world of types into the world of forms. While there may be hundreds of tables, the typical table, that is the idea of the table or the quality of being a table, is a common concept and it is these conceptual types behind material forms that the Indian artist is chiefly concerned with.

It is something like this that the Manus and other Master-builders are doing all the time. They get glimpses of God's Plan and the great types in His Mind which have to be brought down and materialised here, and build forms here approaching more and more those types. The Manu builds form after form, works at it, improves on it, so that it may come nearer and nearer to the ideal form as seen in His plan. That is also what an artist does, though in a different way altogether. Every work of a true artist is only an attempt to bring down God's ideas so that the less evolved amongst us may be helped to understand God's Plan for us. And so the artist presents to us great types into which

we can group all the things around us and thereby get a glimpse of the harmony and orderliness of God's creation.

In drama we have this aspect of art clearly brought out. The immortal lines of Shakespeare,

> "..............................All the world's a stage
>
> And all the men and women merely players,"

are as true as that the stage is a world and all the characters in it represent men and women of different types. The characters in a great drama are not merely individuals but great types. And by studying one such character we come to understand a number of persons belonging to that type. A Dushyantha, an Iago, a Hamlet, a Sakuntala, is a type and lives in all ages and in all countries. Each presents to us a type, but a type akin to that in the Mind of God. The dramatist sums up in himself many varieties of experiences and out of them spins the types and presents them to the world. To quote C. Jinarajadasa, "Shakuntala moves men's hearts in the west as in the east, and now as of old. All Shakespeare's great characters are still with us; translate his plays into any language, and though as poems they lose much, the characters in them lose nothing at all. By studying each character—rather, by understanding each with our intuitions—we know the psychology of hundreds of souls of that type. If we but understand Macbeth or Othello with our intuitions, then all men of that type are understood by us; we know their past actions, and we can anticipate what they will think and do, and so help them and ourselves...... ....Through the types in the great dramas we look into the archetypes of thoughts and emotions, and of souls themselves".

By a study of these characters we can anticipate experiences and guard ourselves against pitfalls. It is not neces-

' for us to undergo every possible experience before we become perfect. We have in us something of a Dush-ta, something of a Hamlet and possibly something of an iimo also. But we can learn many a lesson by studying ;e characters in the great dramas and purify our natures ordingly. We can anticipate many an experience and pre-: ourselves beforehand to meet such an experience. If study some of the villains in the great dramas we can nout being villains ourselves acquire their experiences so say, vicariously, and thereby we can quicken our evolu-ı considerably. This is one of the most important quali- of all true art.

In sculpture also we have this element of constructing es. Many of the statues we find in Hindu temples have n constructed on this principle. The great artists who de them tried to construct typical synthetic figures; they k whatever was, in their opinion, ideally beautiful in ure and made a synthesis of it in such figures. Those y not conform to our ordinary conception of realistic uty, but they have a perfect rhythm about them, a cer-n suggestiveness which makes a deep impression on us. their attempt to include all kinds of beauty they did t even leave out animals. Some of the figures show a rious admixture of human and animal elements. A syn-etic figure will rarely resemble any known figure; it is ver meant to be so. Sir R. Owen constructed a model of synthetic animal showing the common characteristics of large group of animals; but it was so entirely unlike any imal known to us. So also some of the figures in our mples present curious specimens. But the attempt made ere is not to imitate nature but to present types embody-g some common characteristics. That is why very many ople fail to understand and appreciate the art embodied such figures. That they are striking in a way cannot be enied, but if one has to grasp the idea underlying them

and understand the symbology of such figures he will have to view these from the proper standpoint; else he will probably be repulsed by the outer form and miss their true significance.

It is also on this principle that rules have been framed for image-making, architecture and so forth. Great artists who have sensed archetypes have given us certain directions, they are only the minimum conditions that must be fulfilled if the work is to present types and not merely be an imitation. Beyond these the artist is entirely free. Such directions, if they come from a great Master-artist, supply a tradition of immense value to others who aspire to become artists. If it were possible to have minute directions coming from such a master-mind, the work done in accordance therewith is bound to be remarkable in an ideal manner.

True Art enables us to rise through the outer phenomena to the Reality behind them, to pierce through the limitations around us and realise the unlimited, in short, to understand the mind of God in relation to His creations. We can get an idea of this distinguishing quality of art if we consider the scenery painting and the dramatic art. All philosophies tell us that there are two great limitations under which we evolve and to which we must be subject as long as manifestation lasts; all other kinds of limitations can be analysed and resolved into these two fundamental limitations, viz., limitations of Space and Time, the two great pillars supporting the complicated structure of this manifested universe. In scenery painting the artist attempts to lift us above the limitation of space. A certain amount of spatial expanse is necessary to produce a particular effect on our consciousness. If the same effect can be produced by a much less quantity of space of lower dimensions, then it shows that there lies a method of freeing ourselves from the space-limitation. By continuing this process of depending

less and less upon space for the subjective modification which is ordinarily the result of objective space it is theoretically possible to get beyond space. That is what we have in scenery painting. The scenery represented in it might have extended over many many miles in actual space in the three dimensions, but all that you have on a few square feet of canvas or paper. It is only when you relate it to things around you that you begin to cognise the actual size of the canvas. But if you concentrate your attention upon the picture and remain oblivious of other things the impression you get is the same as if you were standing in front of a vast scenery. So, while Nature requires many hundreds of cubic miles to produce an impression upon you, the artist accomplishes the same object on a canvas of a few square inches. There we have clearly an attempt to transcend the limitation of space.

What scenery painting is to space that the drama is to time. Incidents of many years are there presented in the space of a few hours; for the time you feel as if you are moving in time with the characters. Not only this; if it be really a good play written by an artistic genius you are to some extent lifted out of time and placed 'beyond time', where the past, the present and the future coalesce into one "Eternal Now". The characters and the incidents of the drama will not be merely particular individuals or occurrences but will be true for all ages. Experiences of many centuries would be gathered up and presented through the action of the play; and out of the different impressions produced there will emerge a thought which is independent of the time of action of the play or of particular characters in it, but will represent a truth which will obtain at all times and under all conditions. In fact, the great dramas are the great generalisations of the process of nature at all times; the characters in them do not pertain to any particular period of human history. As Willian Hazlitt put it,

"the stage is an epitome, a bettered likeness of the world with the dull part left out", and so in drama we see the beginnings of a process which will ultimately take us out of time into a condition which is beyond the past, the present and the future.

Another important aspect of Art which is not so well recognised is that it gives permanence to ephemeral objects and events in actual life. A beautiful sunset occurs in Nature only at a certain time and under certain conditions. If the evening sun is hidden behind heavy clouds or if it rains heavily at sunset Nature cannot provide that beautiful sunset. So to enjoy a glorious sunset in nature we have to wait for the evening and also for the conditions that will ensure it. But a senset painted by an artist is a permanent record of what happens in nature only once in a way; so what is transitory in nature is by Art given an unique permanence and can be enjoyed by us at any time.

So also a narration of an incident, however important it be historically and politically, is of immediate interest only for the time being, its repetitions later on will be of little interest. But a poetic version of any occurrence is of perennial interest.

Art supplements life and makes it fuller. Our world is full of limitations, deficiencies and disappointments; it is very dull and far from what we would like it to be. But in an artistic presentation all these gaps are filled, dull parts omitted, all shortcomings made good, with the result that we get a complete picture, an ideal representation which approximates to the idea in the mind of God. An artist, however barren his outer life may appear to be, can live a much fuller life by supplementing in his art creations what he misses in actual life. Life may be dull, may be lacking in joy; but by integrating it with his art creations the artist

achieves a fullness, a completeness which would otherwise be impossible of achievement.

Indian art expressions are often symbols of great realities. He may paint a great person with arms going down to the knees (they speak of him as ajanubahu). This may look queer to people whose ideas of art centre round the so-called real things they see around them. Long arm merely means great prowess. They may give ten heads to an individual to indicate that his brain power is ten times that of the ordinary individual. Such figures are very common in Indian art, and they have to be taken as symbols and interpreted properly. If one begins to judge these things by the standard of imitative realism, he is doomed to miss the essential idea behind. To lead us from the particular to the general, from the phenomenal to the noumenal, from the concrete to the abstract, from the shadow to the reality, from the seen to the unseen, from the "seeming" to the "being", is the true object of Indian Art.

When we come to music we reach the perfection of all the ideals of art. All other arts tend towards the condition of music. As C. Jinarajadasa puts it, we generally describe other arts in terms of musical thoughts: we come across expressions like "frozen music" for architecture. All the aims of the different arts find their fulfilment in this, the greatest of all arts. In some mysterious way, it takes us out of the lower realms of existence into sublime regions where we at least for the time being, feel our life fuller, sweeter and nobler. It works out an emotional alchemy in our nature; after hearing a piece of really good music we feel as if we have passed through a process of purification. All arts do this to some extent, but in music the effect is so telling that any one, if he only cares, can observe it. Purifying our emotions it kindles the intuitional nature in us and enables us to see things in a fuller light. Music is verily a purified;

it lifts up, so to say, the several fragments of our emotional nature and places them before us for us to examine and criticise; at the same time it also makes a synthesis of them so that our emotions are the purer, higher and finer for that process. It takes us all out of this world's turmoil and places us in those higher realms of being where all is joy and peace. All this it does, not so much by cold logic or reasoning, but through the super-rational faculty of intuition, which like a lightning flash illumines our vision and enables us to realise life in a way not ordinarily possible otherwise. Music, as Carlyle put it, is truly "the language of the Gods, it is divine". Life should be infinitely poorer without it.

Art is essentially a creative faculty; mere imitation is not true art at all. And creation is an act of joy and sacrifice too, the very sacrifice being the source of joy. We have all of us a bit of that Divine faculty of creation in us, and the Divine artist in us ever seeks to exercise this creative faculty; and every one of us will under that impulse

> "....................something make,
>
> And joy in the making,"

to use the words of an English poet Laureate. Hence it is that true art leads to and springs from joy. The two are interdependent. The greatest help we can render to art is to remove gloom and sorrow, and spread joy every where. An artist if he is to give the best in him for humanity must be given the necessary surroundings for the expression of his art. He should have no worry or care, there must be no need for him to think about anything but his own art. He must be well provided for if he is to fulfill his mission in life. He is a national asset whom we cannot afford to neglect. Much of our joy in life comes through art and by neglecting

and looking down upon artists we shall be shutting out an important source of joy which makes life a song of never ending sweetness.

Human life without art is incomplete, it is barren. While acquisition of knowledge is good in its own way and develops the mental capacity in man, it is through art that his emotional nature (and when this is sublimited, intuitional aspect) is developed best. If one is content only with bread and butter there is little to distinguish him from the beast. So the poet sang "one who is without the gifts of the art of music or poetry is verily a beast devoid of tail and horns." What distinguishes the cultured man from the beast is his capacity to appreciate art. One may not be an artist in practice, but ability to appreciate the significance of works of art is necessary for culture. There is an old Chinese proverb which says, "if you have two loaves, sell one and buy a lily", the implication being that an object of beauty around you is as important as bread and butter; the latter feeds and builds your body while the former feeds and nourishes your soul. Every object of beauty is a messenger of God, the Beautiful, and unconsciously draws forth from us response to the Infinite Beauty of God and awakens us to the real significance of things that we see around us.

For a balanced cultivation of human emotions, there is nothing so powerful as art. Good art purifies our feelings, subdues violent passions, rouses higher emotions and sublimates them into something delicate and beautiful. The one striking effect will be that the emotions become impersonal. With proper artistic training we shall be able to enjoy joy and sorrow impersonally. We shall be able to get joy even out of sorrow. Ananda, Bliss, is above these pairs of opposites, joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain. When we witness a tragedy written by a real artist, and represented by good actors, we put ourselves *en rapport* with the characters for

the time being and we weep with the sufferers and laugh with the joyous characters. When we do that very weeping we derive an aesthetic pleasure, and for that impersonal, aesthetic, sublimated pleasure, we are tempted to go to the same play over and over again, to weep with the character and vicariously undergo all his suffering.

Above all art is a great unifier. A real artist is above caste, above creed, above nationality, above sex. A good work of art is appreciated everywhere. In some of the exhibitions of Indian art in the western countries, people whose make-up is artistic go into raptures over the great beauty and sublimity which characterise Indian art. Art is one of the most effective ways of expressing human soul. Human experience is fundamentally the same everywhere. People weep everywhere, love everywhere, smile everywhere. Unsophisticated expressions of one's inner being have always a universality about them.

Art enriches life. It gives a new meaning to life. It gives us a deeper understanding, a more lasting sense of the values of life. By making our nature artistic we unconsciously develop a sense of fitness in us. We instinctively feel what is good, what is true, and what is not either. Our nature becomes so attuned to the harmony and beauty of nature, which is in a sense the Mirror of God, that we, as a matter of habit, go in for the good and the noble and avoid the bad, the ugly and the mean. Civilised man having any pretentions to culture should have in him this inner poise which a power to appreciate art brings with it, a poise which enables one to understand things not as they seem, but as they are, to look not merely at an object but through it into the Mind of God which worked and created that object; a poise which helps one to realise

> "That Beauty is not, as fond men misdeem
> An outward show of things, that only seem;

For it is heavenly born and cannot die
Being a parcel of the purest sky."

Every nation has a special gift to give to the world, a special message to proclaim, a unique contribution to make, a purpose to fulfil. When it fails to do it or when it has served its purpose it fades away from the world-picture. While nations have come and gone India still lives, for she has still a purpose to serve, a message to give. I feel it is in the plan of God that she has to lead the world in certain aspects of life. It is up to us to enable her to fulfil her mission. Indian outlook, based as it is on the realisation of ultimate Reality, has to dominate the thought of the world if it is to be saved from destruction. In the realm of Art we have a unique contribution to make. We have to treasure the distinctive features of our fine arts, free them from excrescences and maintain their purity. A nation's arts are true expressions of her soul and one cannot tinker with them with impunity. Plato warned people against changing the distinctive style of music of a nation lest it should lead to serious consequences and even undermine the very foundation of the state. While there should be expansion, assimilation and growth in every phase of life, the individual uniqueness of a nation's art should at all costs be preserved. Now that we have freed ourselves of the shackles that handicapped us so far we must utilise that political freedom to achieve real freedom in all aspects of our national life. Are we really free? Economic and political freedom pertain only to the surface; have we achieved inner freedom, are we culturally free, are we independent in our thought, in our ideas? Western ideas of life and man have held us in bondage long, we have been almost hypnotised into thinking along western lines of thought. Let us be frank with ourselves and ask the question, "Do we not still think along western lines, do we not base our judgment still on western standards, even in our habits and dresses, do not the old

ideas still persist?" We have to bestir ourselves, rid ourselves of the old mental cob-webs and enable our nation to give her gift of art, culture, and philosophy to the world. We have to hold aloft the great ideals of our Arts. The power and strength so characteristic of our Architecture, the delicacy and idealism of our paintings, the balance and beauty of poise of our Sculpture, the grace and rhythm of our Dance, the subtlety and spiritual appeal of our Music, all these have to be preserved and vitalised.

23. Indian Classical Dance

Art in India is a sacred vocation; it was considered a method of approach to Reality through a process of intuiting Divine Mind in the expression of that Mind in the phenomena around us. Art and Religion were indivisible as it were. All the greatest works of Indian Art were inspired by religious fervour. Art without the ensouling devotion is something foreign to Indian Culture. To separate spiritual outlook from Art is to make it a dead shell without the ensouling life.

Dance is a composite art, enfolding in its range several other fine arts as well. Of course music goes with dance; dance has also in it the elements of sculpture, poetry and drama. In one sense it may be said to be a complete art, a comprehensive art.

Dancing is imminent in Life; whenever there is an emotional exhuberance in a sentient being, it expresses itself in some outer movement of the limb; the nimble antelope leaps and jumps out of its exhuberance of life, the bird sitting on a tree-branch at sunrise greets the sun with joy and bursts into song accompanied by graceful movement of its head; the little child shouts and jumps in upwelling joy. Why! Nature herself dances in joy at spring time, God himself dances in Ananda. In such movements expressive of inner feeling we have the beginnings of Dance. From the

mirthful leap of a deer to the highly developed and finished Dance of Bharatanatya is a far cry, but one is only a natural development of the other.

The art of Dance had flourished in this country from time immemorial; it existed in the Vedic age, and in the Vedas and the Brahmanas we have references to the dance art and artists.

The principles of Dance Art are based on a study of the relationship between an inner experience and the outer expression of that experience. Certain general principles emerge from such a study and these have been embodied in the works of great writers like Bharata. On account of this fundamental relationship between an inner feeling and its outer expression in the body, when we see a dancer showing a certain gesture, our mind instinctively suggests the emotion of which it is the outer expression and we get into the spirit of the theme danced. Of course a certain amount of convention is inevitable, but anyone interested should have no difficulty in acquainting himself with the fundamentals of it.

History shows that in almost all the ancient civilisations Dance played an important part in religious functions, in one sense it was in itself a ritual. As in those days religion played a great part in the life of the community, dance also played an important part in the life of the nation. In ancient India, Dance was considered as a gift from Lord Siva; we are told that Siva and Parvati gave us the two great branches of Dance, Tandava and Lasya, for bringing some joy to the sorrowful world and peace to the saints.

Dance was part of daily worship; even now in our poojas we offer natya as one of the 16 offerings to the Deity. It pleased the very angels; they looked upon it as an act of sacramental worship. Lord Vishnu is highly pleased with Dance.

Temples being seats of religion, there were attached to their staff artists to supply the necessary music and dance items in the daily routine of worship. As a matter of fact some of the greatest works of architecture and sculpture were executed in and for temples in a spirit of devotion and consecration. A spirit of dedication characterised these artists in their service to Godhead; it was a great privilege to be so dedicated and artists who were so dedicated were held in great honour and reverence. The ladies who were thus dedicated to the temple as dancers were called devadasis, servants of the Lord, a glorious title indeed! What a privilege to be a server of the Lord in however humble a capacity! This idea of dedicating qualified women for temple service and temple ritual is not peculiar to India; it had been in vogue in other civilizations and religions. In ancient Greece and in Egypt and even in Japan, this custom had been current. We have all heard of vestal virgins. In India, if the art of Dance had stood the test of time and survived all the onslaughts which India had to face in the course of her history, we owe it in no small measure to these devadasis who have carried on the art tradition unsullied, especially in South India. (In music also, it is South India that has preserved the essential features of the Indian musical system.) Whatever may be said of the devadasi system from other standpoints, one cannot be too grateful to it for the great service it has done to ensure the preservation of correct traditions and technique. Even today we can find true tradition and correct technique only in the families of the old devadasis and nattuvanars (the dance masters).

The system of dedicating some women to temples for dance was a necessity. The dance art is in several ways different from other arts; not all can be creative artists, a certain inborn aptitude (vasana) is essential. In the case of dance several other factors have to be considered; the dan-

cer's mind should be alert and her physical features should be suitable for dance; the body should be agile and capable of swift and graceful movement, the figure should be well-proportioned; the eyes should be expressive like living pools of glowing emotional fire. Here are the qualifications prescribed for a dancer:—

"Handsome, sweet in speech, steady, sprightly, skilful in conversation, born of good family, learned in shastras, sweet voiced, expert in song, instruments and dance by long practice, quick in understanding and confident."

Even if one is born with these natural gifts, the artist will have to stand the strain of strenuous training for perhaps several years. When all this is achieved there is the vital question: for how many years can she keep up the dancing? At the most, say from the 14th to the 30th year, I mean normally; there may be exceptions. And thus the number of persons who can take up dancing is rather limited and even this limited number can keep up the dancing only for about 15 years. And if, in addition, these dancers live the normal married life with all the responsibilities attendant on it and all the demands it makes on one's time and energy, the chances of their being able to carry on dancing become slender. And so, they had to live a life different from that of the ordinary house-holders, a life in which domestic responsibilities were reduced to a minimum, thereby enabling the dancers to devote their whole time to the art and at the same time preserve their physical fitness for dance for as long a period as possible. The Davadasi system was intended to serve these purposes.

Unfortunately, however, human nature being what it is, this great ideal was forgotten and the artist was dragged into the mire. It is not the dancer who was responsible for this degradation but the society which, dominated by lower passions, tempted the artist away from her high calling. All

degradation and falling off from true purpose is the result of human weakness. Are temples now what they were of old? Are the various mathas discharging their functions properly today? The human hand has polluted many an institution. In the name of God, man hates man; all the wonderful gifts of science which can make a heaven of this earth are prostituted for unholy and inhuman purposes. Why then should the devadasi system alone have been singled out for this victimisation? Has its suppression really improved the moral standard of the community? I wonder and wonder!

The degradation which set in went so low that there was launched an anti-nautch movement and this gained such momentum that the elite thought it beneath their dignity to attend a nautch. And an English lady named Miss Pennant came all the way from England to help and vitalise this movement. It was at this juncture that there came a wave of a general art renaissance in the country and, thanks to the pioneer work of Sm. Rukmini Devi, dance art which was under a taboo began to hold up its head. Reaction set in, the old prejudice against nautch began to wane, it looked as if the pendulum was swinging the other way. It generally happens that when a violent reaction sets in there is a tendency to over-do things. Let me quote here what I have said elsewhere:

"And now, in this swing back, where are we? What has been achieved? Has the art come back really to its own? Before we answer these questions it is worthwhile to keep in mind some fundamental ideas regarding the art of dance. Now the word seems to cover all kinds of movements; we hear of dance here, there, everywhere. A child of seven or eight dressed in costly clothes and decked with brilliant jewels, standing in front of footlights with coloured floodlight playing on her body in and out of season, with or without rhyme or reason, leaps and jumps on the stage

and hundreds and thousands of people forming the audience clap their hands lustily; the girl jumps all the more briskly. There you have a picture of what now often passes off as a dance!! The next day, the papers are full of it; and if the child is well-connected encomiums are showered on her in abundance. Poor child, I have only pity for her!"

Is this Bharatanatya? No, a thousand times no! It is a great art with its own highly finished technique; it is something like a great ritual in which every item has its significant part to play; the body and the mind are attuned in a kind of yoga.

"Music is to be produced by the throat, the hands to be used to bring out the meaning of the song, the eyes should express the appropriate bhava and the feet keep rhythm all the time."

Art is in one sense the essence of a Racial experience. To tinker with it with impunity is an inexcusable affront to the Muse of Art. We have somehow here in the South preserved the classical dance. Dr. Tagore witnessing the performance of a Kathakali actor said, "Those of us belonging to North India, who have lost memory of the pure Indian classical dance, have experienced a thrill of delight at the exhibition of dancing given by a student of the Kalamandalam, whose technique of dance was taken solely from Kathakali. I feel grateful at the assurance it has brought to us that the ancient art is still a living tradition of India with its varied grace and vigour and subtleties of dramatic expression". Shall we allow such a tradition to be vitiated?

There are two fundamental aspects to this Art which may be broadly called Tandava and Lasya. In the former, movement and rhythm are dominant features; in the latter, bhava and rasa are all in all. As we all know, rhythmic, balanced movements of the body well planned and carefully executed have a tremendous effect on our emotions. This

has been proved beyond doubt. Such exercises help in the first place to build a healthy, nimble and adaptable body. This in itself is a great thing. Then, if these exercises are done in groups they build up our instinctive sense of comradeship, cooperation, subjecting one's own personality to the needs of the group. Individual angularities are rounded off and a collective consciousness is developed. This is a desirable emotional reaction. If in addition the children are well dressed and the group chosen with an eye to artistic effect and the 'dances' are performed in artistic surroundings, the result will be remarkable and the spectators derive a real aesthetic pleasure, though this pleasure is mostly ocular.

When we come to Abhinaya (lasya aspect) it is an entirely different matter. There lies the whole of the snag. Here it is a question of bhava, feeling and expressing various shades (including the subtlest) of feeling through gestures, poses (mudras) and facial features. Though there is no definite restriction as to the theme of the piece chosen for abhinaya it has been an almost unbroken custom to choose *sringara rasa* pieces for the purpose. There are, among other reasons, two prominent ones behind this. All art is Divine and meant to lead Jivatma to union with Paramatma. Human soul is ever-seeking union (yoga) with the Oversoul and this search for union is bhakti, devotion. They speak of various forms of this devotion and one of the forms, perhaps the most effective one is nayaka-nayaki bhava, the human soul surrendering itself as the beloved (nayaki) of the One Lover (nayaka) of the Universe. Even the obviously erotic songs when properly interpreted will reveal this high purpose.

Also pieces composed for abhinaya are specially made for the purpose; they contain words which lend themselves effectively to the gesture language. A devotional or erotic song may be quite good as a song, but if it is to be danced

with abhinaya the composition should be pre-eminently "danceable"—if I may coin a word to express what I mean. Also the mudras used should be such as can be understood by all and the subject matter of the piece should be capable of arousing fundamental and almost instinctive emotions in the people. "Erotic" themes naturally meet these demands very well. I do not mean that other emotions cannot be roused or that pieces cannot be composed on other themes. But in our lyric literature sringara rasa themes have been found most suitable and so are available in plenty. There are also other themes fit for dance. The other day I saw the composition "Innamum Orutharum" of Gopalakrishna Bharati danced by a Kalakshetra artist; it was simply marvellous, and I was wondering why such pieces should not be sought out and danced. But such pieces are rare. There is no reason why good songs fit for dance should not be composed in other themes and in other rasas by competent composers. I have seen some other songs rendered in dance even now, for example, "Varukalamo" in Nandan Charitram, "Thiruvadi saranam", "Ra ra Sita ramanee manohara", a kriti by Thyagaraja. Frankly these fall flat, for the simple reason that they are not nor were meant to be "danceable".

So, considering the nature of the stock of songs available for dance purposes, the question arises, how far young children of 7 or 8, why even 11 or 12 can do justice to it. In abhinaya "Tanmayatvam" and "Tajjatyam" are indispensible. However clever the child may be she can at best only imitate (perhaps even to perfection) what she has been taught to show by gestures. I am not here referring to the professional dancing class child. Will that be abhinaya? No, thousand times no! If a grown-up girl who can be expected to understand sringara rasa dances such erotic songs and does them with good bhava and tanmayatva, what may be the result? I am not speaking of exceptional souls who

live in a higher plane and who interpret everything in terms of Divine play, Iswara Lila. Taking an ordinary young girl in her teens, one may consider the possible reaction on her emotional nature of dancing out such themes. I may be permitted to quote here what Sri N. Raghunatha Aiyar said in his presidential address to the South Indian Natya-kala Conference held in December last:

"The feeling of grave exaltation and earnest devoutness, as of one participating in some holy mystery,..... has now all but disappeared. On the middle class households from which most of the votaries of the art of dance as well as the audience are now being drawn, secularism has settled like a blight. To imagine that a girl taught to render with abhinaya a Krishna Karnamrita sloka keeps her mind anchored firmly in the faith that it is not carnal love that she depicts but the lila of the Lord, is to assume the pervading influence of a home atmosphere which is simply not there."

Many of the present day dance recitals are an eye-sore to a true art lover. It is more a tendency towards exhibitionism than anything related to art. "This tendency seems to be the dominant note in our modern dance performances. The undue importance which is being given to the loudness and brilliance of the costume and jewellery, to the lighting arrangements with flood-light playing on the person of the dancer, to the frequent change of dress lacking at times even a sense of appropriateness, all this indicates the growing "exhibitionistic" tendency, which if allowed to go uncurbed, may eat the very vitals of our social, moral and cultural well-being. In this respect our nautch-girls of old were definitely on the better and safer side. They were true to tradition in almost every detail; their technique was strictly traditional; their dress too was according to pattern evolved by long years of experience. They did not depend for the success of their art on such accidental

appurtenances like costume and lighting, they were so sure of their technique and had deep faith in its artistic perfection. Their dress on the whole was most suited for dance and was governed by consideration of modesty and decency much more than what we witness in some of modern dances, especially the dances in which our present-day cinema pictures abound. Perhaps the less said about this the better."

At one of the recitals of Balasaraswati I happened to hear some remarks which almost shocked me and showed to what extent the taste of the ordinary theatre-goer has been vitiated by this growing tendency towards "exhibitionism." Some of the ladies in the audience were making derisive remarks about Balasaraswati not changing her dress. One of them actually asked. "What is the meaning of giving a dance performance without changing dresses!" This clearly showed how the whole idea about Natya and attitude to a Bharatanatya performance had been vitiated and become even perverted. To that lady perhaps dance meant only dress-ringing and nothing more. She evidently forgot that she was witnessing a Bharatanatya performance and not a hotchpotch show with items like Kurathi dance, Snake-charmer dance, Peacock dance, Beggar dance and so on (heaven alone knows what these dances mean) all jumbled into a two hours "dance-performance." At this rate the real dance of India, the dance which was considered sacred and fit to be offered in devotion to the Lord, may go into oblivion, and in its place a kind of secular hybrid travesty of art may masquerade as the art of dance and lead us to a sort of artistic suicide. Heaven save us from such a calamity!

Even taking only the Tandava side of dance, one may doubt the wisdom of young girls exhibiting themselves in front of footlights, in georgeous dress (or undress), to a packed house of a thousand and more people, not all of whom look to the higher side of art expression. Can we

say with any justification that girls of twelve or thereabouts who are coming out to dance in such large numbers of late, will be able to command the necessary inner poise and self-possession which come out of maturity and artistic intuition?

I know that several ardent dance promoters ask, "Did not our celestial damsels dance? Did not princesses in our ancient royal courts learn and practise dancing?" Well, the answer is quite simple. I trust that we do not wish our daughters to become Urvaśis and Menakas whose ethical code is not in tune with ours. As for the princesses, in the first place we have no statistical data in the matter. It is quite probable that several of our ancient princesses were given training in dance. But did any of them come forward to dance before a crowded house in a public place? Certainly not.

There are some great enemies to Art which its votaries have to guard against. In the history of any art, there comes a stage when the life side and the form side of the art begin to pull at each other and in the struggle the form wins. This success of the form over the life sounds the death knell to the art. Then again the tendency to feel self-sufficient which comes to many artists leads to stagnation and hence to atrophy. A third enemy is mere imitation without imbibing the inspiration which makes the art a living thing. Perhaps the most potent and dangerous enemy is the pseudo critic who, calling himself a rasika, sets a wrong or spurious standard of appreciation, which is accepted without question by others, with the result that the dancer is slowly veered away from true and correct tradition to false though apparently popular standards. This is a subtle and therefore, dangerous enemy. If conferences and Sabhas can help in preserving correct and traditional standards in the art of dance by putting their foot down on the wrong and undesirable tendencies which are now

threatening to stifle the art and guarding the art against its enemies, it would be a great act of worship at the altar of the Muse of Art.

A cultured person should be able to appreciate dance, music and other arts; he should develop in himself the required sensibility to do this. This does not mean that a cultured person learns any art with a view to take it as his profession or a life job. So any training in art has to meet these two-fold objects: (i) to give intensive training needed for an expert who seeks to make a profession of it, (ii) to give some general training which will enable any cultured person to understand and intelligently appreciate the fine arts.

24. Some Thoughts on Dramatic Art and Kalidasa's Shakuntalam

Ever since man began to use his power of thought he has attempted to understand something of Nature around him and its mystery. The mighty torrent rolling down from the snow-clad peaks, the awe-inspiring sound of the thunder, the silent serenity of majestic mountain ranges, the invariable sequence of all processes of nature, have ever filled men's hearts with a deep yearning to understand their meaning. Whether it was an element of fear that first filled the soul of man, or a sense of utter helplessness before the stern and rigid laws which ruled all happenings, or again a peculiar feeling of suppressed elation at the beauty and grandeur of Nature's workshop, there is ever deep at heart, in the innermost recesses of the soul-nature in man, a longing for understanding, feeling, and realising the source of all the apparent mystery which ever surrounds him, manifesting itself in newer and newer forms in the process of time. Many have approached the solution, partial or total, as the case may be, through philosophy; others have approached it, through devotion; while many others have sought and are still seeking it through the service of fellow beings. In

one or other of these and many other forms, man has tried to solve the problem of existence, the relation of man to God, the relation of the phenominal world to its creator. Whatever the path, the final goal is the same, the sensing of the Reality behind all the fleeting forms and ephemeral phenomena. And one of the most useful, but probably not so very popular, of these paths is the path of Art. This path has not got so many avowed votaries as the other paths, or at any rate, many do not recognise in Art one of the most potent factors in the progress of the human soul towards the Divine. But none the less, it is true that just as we can approach God behind nature through his Wisdom, Love, or Activity, so also we can approach and sense Him through His aspect of Beauty. God is as beautiful as he is wise or loving; and the philosophy of the Beautiful is as good and consistent a system of philosophy as any other. Orpheus and Plato, and in modern times Ruskin and others, have attempted to realise God through Art; all great artists, whether they be poets or sculptors, dramatists or painters, architects or musicians, are all the time trying to realise, through their art, God in His aspect of Beauty.

What is Art then? Art is a means by which the artist brings down something of the nature of God to our world of physical happenings, it enables us to rise through the outer phenomena to the Reality behind them; to understand Nature from the standpoint of the Creator, to pierce through the limitations around us and realise the unlimited; in short, to understand the mind of God in relation to His creation and that through that creation itself. That which helps us to accomplish this object, in a greater or smaller degree, is alone real Art.

Philosophy tells us that there are two great limitations which have been imposed on us and to which we must be subject as long as manifestation lasts; they are the limitations of Time and Space, the two great fundamental pillars

in the complicated structure of the world's mystery. In painting, the artist attempts to lift the human consciousness out of the limitation of space. Take a piece of scenery painting; the scenery represented there might have extended over many miles in nature, but all that you have on a few square feet of canvas. It is only when you relate it to things around you, you begin to recognise the actual size of the canvas and the picture on it; but if you concentrate your attention on the painting, the impression you get is the same as if you were standing in front of a vast scenery and admiring it, provided of course the painter is a true artist. So, while nature requires many hundreds of square miles to produce a particular impression on you, the artist accomplishes the same purpose on a canvas of a few square inches. So there you have clearly an attempt to transcend the limitation of Space. What scenery painting is to space, that drama is to time. Incidents of many years are there represented in the space of a few hours; and for the time being you feel as if you are moving in time with the characters. Not only this; if it be really a good play, experiences of many centuries would be gathered up and presented through the action of the play; out of the different impressions produced there will emerge a thought which is independent of the time of the action of the play or of particular characters in it, but will represent a truth which will obtain at all time and under all conditions. In fact, the great dramas are the great generalisations of the process of nature. The characters in it are more than particular individuals belonging to particular periods of human history; they represent types. In any form of art, the true artist tries to represent the type and the nearer this type is to the idea in the Mind of the Creator—or as it is called the Archetype the more true is the artist. As William Hazlitt would put it. "the stage is an epitome, a bettered like-ness of the world, with the dull part left out". The immortal lines of Shakespeare.

"All the world's a stage
And all the men and women merely players:"

are as much true as that the stage is a world, and all the characters in it represent men and women of different types. The dramas of the true artist "do not depict actions of mere individuals, but of individuals who are representative of types." "'SAKUNTALAM' moves men's hearts in the West as well as in the East, and now as of old. All Shakespeare's great characters are still with us; translate his plays into any language, and though as poems they lose much, the characters in them lose nothing at all. By studying each character, we know the psychology of hundreds of souls of that type.........................Through the types in the great dramas, we look into the archetypes of thoughts and emotions, and of souls themselves."

And what is this archetype? It is the type in the mind of God. God plans in His mind ere He creates and produces forms down here; these exist in His mind as ideas; it is these ideas that we call archetypes. An archetype when it descends into the world of forms and concrete things manifests itself in various shapes. The idea behind is one, but the concrete manifestation of that idea may be manifold. For example, let us take the human type called the Teutonic. The Germans and the British, and several other nations of Europe belong to this type, but they are all different one from the other. A type is the generalisation of a number of particular things belonging to that type. All the multifarious things we see around us, exist in the mind of God as archetypes, and the function of the true artist is to enable us to sense them through his works. Shakespeare's Iago is not a mere individual, but a type; there were, are and probably there will be many Iagos in the world; so also a Dushyanta or a Sakuntala. They all represent types akin to those in the mind of God. The artist sums up in

himself many varieties of individual experiences and out of them spins the types and presents them to the world, so that through them many may get a glimpse, however passing, of the ideal world, the world of God's ideas. Multiplicity and diversity here, but unity and generality above. In the words of Browning, "On the earth broken arcs, in the heaven a perfect round." Just as one shining disc in the sky, the moon, is reflected in the different waves of a vast expanse of water and appears as multiformed discs, so also what is only one in the mind of God, shows itself down, in numerous forms. Let all waves merge into one vast motionless sheet of water, and you see the one brilliant moon shining in all its splendour, so also let all ideas of difference, let the passing whims and fancies tranquillise into one silent mental repose, then unity arises. To realise unity through diversity is the goal of humanity; to sense the type through the different members of the type, to rise from particularities to generalities, is the path of the philosopher, the devotee, the philanthropist, the artist, and all who seek the Divine. That then is the function of the drama, to enable us to rise above differences and sense the type behind individuals and thereby get nearer God's idea.

As regards 'Shakuntalam', let me at the outset make a few observations about the construction of the drama. To me, this play seems to be perfect from the stand-point of construction and sceneic development. You know there are seven acts in "Shakuntalam." I wonder why Kalidasa chose the number seven for the number of acts of his best play. According to the rules of Sanskrit histrionic art, a drama may have from five to ten acts. Kalidaśa has taken the number seven. We know that seven is considered to be a mystic number, full of occult significance; everywhere in Nature this number plays an important part; there are the seven notes of the musical scale and the seven prismatic colours; certain diseases show peculiar turns on the 7th, 14th and

21st days and so on; the waxing and the waning of the moon depend on that number. It is also interesting to note that Shakespeare when he speaks of the world as a stage divides the life of man into seven stages.

"And one man in his time plays many parts
His acts being seven ages.................... ...".

Might it not be that Kalidasa wanted to show that this drama was to represent the world with the seven great stages and so divided it into seven acts? I would even go further and try to show that there is some analogy between the seven stages mentioned by Shakespeare and the seven acts of "Shakuntalam". In the first act we are introduced to the heroine, Shakuntala, in all her innocence and simplicity of Ashrama life, tended and fondly looked after by her foster-father and other hermits, and this corresponds to the first stage of Shakespeare, 'the infant in the nurse's arms'. Shakuntala is here verily a child in the drama of life that was to be played later on by her. Then comes,

"The whining school boy with his satchel
And shining morning face, creeping like snail,
Unwilling to School."

In the second act we find, Dushyanta who had come to the forest to hunt and thereby discharge his duty as Kshatriya king, is unwilling to hunt; he brings forward all sorts of excuses and declines to hunt like an unwilling school boy. Then comes the stage of,

"the Lover,
Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad
Made to his mistress's eye-brow".

It appears as though Shakespeare summed up in two lines the whole action of the third Act of "Shakuntalam". It is in this act that the love between Dushyanta and Shakun-

tala is fully worked out and we find both 'sighing like furnace', each with a ballad made to the other.

The next act appears to have no obvious connection with the fourth stage of Shakespeare, the soldier, but still we can find some of the characteristics of the soldier in the sage Kanva, the main character in the action of the fourth act. Kanva is a soldier fighting in the spiritual realm, and just as our ordinary soldier does not mind his personal considerations and looks on his body as only the property of the State which has a right to claim it when needed, so also Kanva, in spite of all his affection for the sweet Shakuntala, looks upon her as only a trust to be handed over to him who had a right to claim her. The last verse in the fourth act brings out this idea pointedly.

When we come to the fifth act, we find the king discharging his duties as an impartial judge irrespective of his own inclinations. Charming as she is, Shakuntala cannot warp his judgement. Though his inclinations tend to make him lenient towards Shakuntala, the king declines to swerve from the path of justice, and this is analogous to the fifth stage of Shakespeare. When the lost ring is put into Dushyanta's hands and the whole succession of events flashes across his memory, he loses zest in everything and begins to moralise on his condition as well as that of other childless people. He is much emaciated and just as in Shakespeare the man in the sixth stage finds,

> "His youthful hose well saved a world too wide
> For his shrunk shank,"

Dushyanta in the sixth act finds his golden bangle too loose for his shrunk arm. The "last scene of all that ends this strange eventful history is second childishness, mere oblivion." We meet again Shakuntala in an Ashrama as we saw her in the first act, surrounded by hermits and in the bliss of reunion all the past misery is sunk in oblivion. We

find none of those things that marked the intervening period of pain, 'sans everything' of sorrow, and there is an end of all trouble. So there is a remarkable analogy between the seven acts of "Shakuntalam" and the seven stages of Shakespeare's world drama.

Again, see how balanced the construction is, there is perfect symmetry; the acts from the beginning and the end bear a close resemblance to one another in their actions and scenes. The first act opens with Dushyanta riding his car driven by his charioteer; while in the seventh act, we find him in the car of Indra run by the hands of Mathali, Indra's charioteer. The main action in these two acts is the meeting of Dushyanta and Shakuntala; in the first act, he meets her for the first time, and in the seventh, he meets her first after the restoration of his memory regarding the events connected with Shakuntala. In the second act we find the love-sick king extolling the charms of his beloved to his friend, Mathavya, the Vidooshaka, and this is also the main action of the sixth act, where the king, with all his past memories vitified once again, is panting for his beloved, and Vidooshaka is the person on whom the vents all his eulogies about her. In the third act, the hero and the heroine meet and marry, while in the fifth they meet as husband and wife. The fourth act stands quite apart and has nothing in common with any of the other acts; the very atmosphere in this act is unique and is entirely foreign to the sentiments which characterise the action of the other acts.

As regards delicate touches and skilful avoidance of repetitions one can quote dozens of instances. In the first act where Shakuntala's friend narrates the story of Vishwamitra and Menaka the king interrupts her and saves her the embarrassment of having to narrate apparently indelicate incidents. In the third act where the king and Shakuntala meet alone in the bower Gautami is introduced just

at the right moment. The hint her friends give Shakuntala of the approach of Gautami is a masterly touch.

In the fifth act the king has lost all memory about Shakuntala and asks her to remind him of incidents which would enable him to remember his relations with her. The incidents she narrates are not incidents which the audience have seen already enacted on the stage. The same touch is used in the sixth act where the discovery of the Royal signet ring is narrated; the dramatist manages so to direct the narration as to avoid repeating what the audience already know.

There is an exquisite dramatic touch used in the sixth act which I cannot help referring to. Naturally the same person acts the king in all the six acts. In the beginning of the sixth act the chamberlain describes how the king, his memory restored, was living a life of intense agony and consequently has become thin and emaciated. Unless the make-up artist was a genius it would be physically impossible to make a good-looking, well built person look suddenly thin and emaciated. The dramatist anticipates this difficulty and provides for it by making the chamberlain say that though the king had become lean it could not be easily noticed on account of his innate lustre and royal effulgence. One can go on quoting such instances, but these should be enough to show the mastery of the dramatist.

It is not my purpose to deal with the usual criticism about characterisation. Much has been written about the shy forest maiden Shakuntala, the Dhirodattanayaka Dushyanta, the idiotic court fool Madhavya and the sage Kanva. These are types of humanity and a deep study of their psychologies will, as I have already mentioned, give a sort of vicarious experience which will benefit us as if we had gone through that experience ourselves. I wish however to say a few words about the sage Kanva. He is a rare specimen of the highest type of Rishi. He is not an ascetic who

shuns the world and goes into retreat in a jungle or a cave; he could love with human love but in a sublimated way; he could look into the future and foresee the fate hanging over Shakuntala, but he would not interfere with the natural Law of karma. He knew on his arrival at his Ashrama that Shakuntala had accepted the hand of the king of her own accord, but he accepts the inevitable and proceeds to arrange for sending his foster-daughter to her husband's home. He loves her with all the warmth of a real father, but all the time there is a certain background of high impersonality behind it all. He makes all arrangements, fixes the escorts, and attends to every detail like an ordinary house-holder. The time comes for parting; sage as he is, there is a deep pang, tears well up in his eyes, his voice is choked; but in the presence of Shakuntala he keeps calm; and when she has departed he falls back on his wonted serenity and is the unruffled sage once again. A real sage has transcended the experiences of a house-holder; he does not become a sage by merely running away from family ties; a sage is a house-holder sublimated; his range of experience covers all the experiences of a house-holder and comprises much more perhaps beyond the reach of the latter. His advice to Shakuntala and his message to the king are the quintessence of wisdom, courtesy, forethought and deep insight into human nature. We love and admire Kanva for these things much more than for his asceticism or abstruse Yoga practices. In him we find the consummation of what all real spiritual aspirants strive for.

In conclusion I would like to say a word about the general atmosphere of the play. Practically all the acts except perhaps the fifth and the sixth are played in forest hermitages where man and beast and trees live as one family, each loving the others like brothers. The simple yet elevated life of the hermits is the keynote of the play. Man is nearest to his Maker in such surroundings and not in the

din of strife and competition. There he communes with Nature and gets into touch with God. Simplicity of life untrammelled by man-made conventions and institutions helps the growth of the human soul which, like a tender rose bud, seeks congenial atmosphere for its unfolding. The play is full of references to the great love which the hermits and Shakuntala have for the beasts and trees. Shakuntala bidding farewell to her pet lamb, Kanva seeking for the blessings of the forest deities on her and his description of the tender love she has borne for the trees and shrubs and creepers are some of the most touching situations in the play. Man is born in varied environments; he has different duties and avocations; but his soul ever hungers for an anchorage; it is ever restless and seeks that anchorage in various ways. The final glory comes to him when he has realised that all life is one and that in simplicity of life and unselfish love lies the way leading to the Kingdom of Heaven.

25. Kathakali : the Dance Drama of Kerala

Kathakali, the dance-drama peculiar to Kerala, is in essence a pantomime show, in which stories from Puranas are depicted with musical accompaniments through signs and gestures of the actors. It has been a very popular art on the west coast. Though for a short while there was some neglect it has now come to be recognised as an important aspect of art and is receiving attention and recognition all around. There is a distinct atmosphere about Kathakali, which makes it similar to the old Mystery Plays of the West. In one sense Kathakali is a kind of Magic, the make-up, the costume and gestures all combining to produce a distinct other-worldly atmosphere. Usually Rama and Krishna are the central figures round which all the stories are woven.

To a stranger the make-up and costumes of the Kathakali actors may appear fantastic and weird. But one can

easily understand that all the details have been carefully worked out to produce almost a ceremonial effect. The make-up is a very elaborate process and at times it takes three to four hours to make up a particular character. They generally start this at dusk, the actor lies down flat and the make-up artist starts his work on the actor; different kinds of flour paste mixed in different colours are used; the process being rather long the actor at times goes to sleep in the course of this process. It is not easy to give a precise description of this. But the effect is marvellous; the very sight of a made-up Kathakali actor is enough to lift you to a different world.

As I have already said there are different kinds of make-up depending upon the character to be depicted. There is a very large variety of characters, but they can be grouped under four or five broad headings:—

(1) *Paccha* (green) in which green is used for the face, red for the limbs, and black for the eyes and eye-lashes. There is a border of a mixture of rice flour and chunam all along the outline of the cheek. Outstanding characters like Krishna, Rama, Arjuna and so on, appear in this make-up.

(2) *Minukku* in which red and yellow colours dominate on the face. Generally this make-up is used for ladies, sages and Brahmins.

(3) There is another variety called *Tadi* with three sub-divisions. A beard in appropriate colour and a furred-coat, and a big projection on the forehead and the nose are characteristic of this type. White colour is used in the case of Sathvic characters like Hanuman, red in the case of forceful leaders like Bali and black is generally dominant for characters like Kali.

(4) A very elaborate make-up is employed in the variety called Katti, where green and red are blended and

also a white knob is attached to the nose. Generally Asuras are represented in this make-up.

(5) Characters like hunters, clowns, etc., appear in the make-up called Kari, in which black dominates. We generally find in this type all kinds of fantastic and comic representations.

The costumes as already indicated are elaborate, almost to the point of looking fantastic. The head-gear is a very striking ornament, the ear-rings are big round discs, silver nails are attached to the fingers, and garlands and bracelets and girdles and jingling anklets are all used. The skirt is made of long pieces of embroidered cloth, interspersed and folded, and is so worn round the waist that freedom is assured for acting and dancing.

The stage for a Kathakali performance is a very simple affair. A thatched hut in any convenient place is used as a stage; lighting is provided by two big bell-metal lamps well supplied with oil and wicks. There is only a single curtain which is held across the stage by two people holding its two ends about six feet from the floor. There are no scenic arrangements. When a character is to appear on the stage the curtain is drawn aside by one of the holders. Generally the audience squat on the floor. The only furniture used for any actor to sit is a wooden mortar or a wooden stool. The background music is provided by a number of musicians standing well behind. Generally only such singers are chosen as have very powerful voice which will stand out clear in the midst of the noisy instruments like *Chendai* and *Maddalam*, the gong and resounding cymbals.

The Kathakali troupe generally consists of 30 people, of whom a dozen are actors. Till very recently, almost every rich and aristocratic family of Kerala was maintaining a troupe of its own. A Kathakali show is practically an all-

night affair; by about 9 P.M. the beating of drums indicates that the play is about to begin, the performance proper generally lasts for about 8 hours. The intervals between the appearances of the actors are filled by singing and drumming. While the play is going on, the theme will be sung by the orchestra and the actor will interpret the action by gestures and by manipulation of the so-called *Mudras* (hand poses — representatives of various types of emotion and action). In the use of these Mudras, strict adherence to traditional methods is compulsory, no deviation is allowed. And all the time there is the background of dance which is indispensable for any Kathakali actor.

The dance side of Kathakali is of perennial interest; it supplies rhythmic background and helps to keep the atmosphere of the art. Both the types, Tandava and Lasya, are used, though generally the former dominates. In the mode of dance employed by Kathakali actors there is a general indication of the original martial spirit which was dominant in the people of Kerala. When a verse or a song has been acted there is a winding called *Kalasa*, in which the dance is worked out to a careful finish through various movements of the feet accompanied by jumping and leaping. The time-measure has a prominent place in Kathakali dance and experts use various kinds of tala-measure in the finishing steps of *Kalasa*.

Persons who want to become Kathakali actors take to an elaborate system of apprenticeship. When very young the body has to be trained, made nimble, elastic and alert. Generally one takes to this training between the ages of 12 and 15. The preliminary exercises are mostly physical, and when the body has become suitable the apprentice is given training in the use of *Mudras*, and then foot work is taught. To get a fairly good standard of proficiency it may take 6 to 8 years of continuous practice.

As many as 24 Mudras (hand-poses) are used in Kathakali. I do not propose to mention all of them here. Three or four of the more important ones may however be referred to.

(1) The *Pataka*, in which the fourth finger is bent inwards towards the centre of the palm while the remaining fingers are held erect. This is used in connection with kings, elephants, lions and so on.

(2) *Nataka*, in which the middle finger is turned so as to touch the palm while the index finger and the thumb are brought together so as to make a circle and the other two fingers are extended. This goes with Vishnu, Sri Rama, women, star, umbrella and so on.

(3) *Mudra* is generally used to indicate Veda, Brahma, Svarga, sky, meditation, affection, etc. In this the index and the thumb form a circle, while the other fingers remain extended.

(4) *Mushti* which consists in the thumb being inserted between the middle and the fourth fingers while the other fingers are closed up towards the palm, is generally indicative of Yama, sudra, yaksha, fight, strength and so on.

These and several other Mudras are used in various combinations so as to produce a large number of complicated expressions.

Naturally all the nine sentiments or *Rasas* are used. Certain facial movements are associated with each of these *Rasas*; for example, raising the eyebrows with wide open eyes and holding erect the neck and the face express *Veera Rasa* (Valour); curving the eye-brows and half closing the eye go with *Hasya Rasa* (ridicule or sneer); if the hands are held in a worshipful posture and the pupils of the eyes look upward in a slant, obviously *Karuna Rasa* (compassion) is meant. Similarly all the nine Rasas have their corresponding movements of the various parts of the face.

The art of Kathakali has an uniqueness of its own. It has been developed out of an instinctive recognition of the dance art as a mode of contacting the inner worlds and superphysical beings. It had its own heyday, and, as in other things, there had been ups and downs for this art also. In the new life that is now pulsating in this country this art also is having its due share and it is hoped that, while certain improvements based upon modern conveniences may be made, the essential features of the art will be kept intact, so that the art may fulfil its true purpose.

26. Drama, a Form of Yoga

To put Drama and Yoga in juxtaposition may appear to be rather strange. In popular mind Yoga is associated with certain fantastic notions like a flowing beard, matted hair, etc., while Drama, Music, etc., are related to the lighter side of life. Art has been considered as a luxury to be indulged in by the rich and leisured class. This is really not so. Culture which includes Drama, Music and all forms of Art as well as Science and Philosophy is an absolute necessity of life and makes for human progress which would become meaningless without art sensitiveness. As the poet put it, the person without knowledge of music and letters is distinguished from the animal only by the lack of horns and tail.

While the instincts of self preservation and race preservation are fundamental to all life, the great thing that distinguishes a cultured man from the beast is that minimum time is given by him for these two purposes and more time is released for higher cultural pursuits. The Chinese saying "If you have two loaves, sell one and buy a lily" is very significant. Culture and Fine Arts are food for our souls just as bread keeps the body going.

In India, Art has always been considered a sacred vocation, a path of approach to the Supreme, a road to Reality.

Just as God can be realised through His aspects of Wisdom, Love and Power, so He can be approached through the aspects of Beauty which is equally an aspect of God. We may recall the famous Divine Trinity enunciated by Plato—God the good, the true, the beautiful. The line of approach to God along the line of Beauty has been called Soundarya Yoga, just as we have Jnana Yoga, Bhakti Yoga and Karma Yoga.

In Drama particularly, we can see very many of the elements which go to make for Yoga. Yoga is generally understood to mean the path of union with the Source of things—the word Yoga literally means union, and a Yogi always looks to a way of approach to the Ultimate Root of things.

Now we shall take some aspects which are common both to Yoga and Drama. A yogi always looks for chances of realising identification with as many people as possible so that he can build into himself the experiences of various types of human beings. A good actor does this very thing on the stage. Unless an actor is able to achieve this identification (of course, artistically) he can never be a good actor, and the greater the variety of characters the more is the power of identification with others developed, perhaps unconsciously.

To the true dramatist, a character or an event has special significance which may escape the notice of ordinary people. To him a particular character or an event represents thoughts in the Cosmic Mind and in trying to portray such characters and events he is in a way contacting the Divine Mind, and this is also in a way the aim of a Yogi. The Yogi always looks for Divinity in everything and in every occurrence. To him all that he experiences down here are only imperfect, perhaps even distorted, expressions of thoughts in the mind of God, and he tries to get behind these imper-

fect impressions to the Divine idea of which these are expressions. In other words, a Yogi always looks for things and events not as they *seem* to be down here, but as they *are* really in the mind of God. The things in the mind of God were called by Plato Archetypes, i.e., abstract ideas in the Divine Mind which give rise to millions of concrete things and events down here. A dramatist, if he is really an artist, does this very thing when he portrays great characters and events. Through these characters and events the dramatist enables us to get glimpses of them as they exist in the mind of God. We may put it this way: the characters and events in a great drama, though they may have a historical basis, really represent typical characters and typical events, as they are in the mind of the God all the time. The Hamlet as portrayed by Shakespeare was not merely a prince of Denmark at a particular time in the world history, but he was a *typical* person who appears in the world at all times. So also, Shakuntala was not merely a charming girl brought up by Sage Kanva. Shakuntala of Kalidasa is a type of an innocent girl brought up in certain surroundings and then thrown into other surroundings. There had been, there are and there will be many Hamlets, Othellos, Shakuntalas and Dushyantas in the world. Here we see how the dramatist falls into line with the Yogi.

The basis of this world of manifestation is said to be the dual limitation of space and time. The object of Yogi is to transcend these limitations. In the art of scenery painting there is a distinct suggestion of an attempt to get over the limitation of space. On a paper or a canvas of a few square inches area, the artist paints a scenery which in nature may extend over many square or cubic miles, and if the artist is really a master the effect of the painting will be as good as, if not better than, the effect of the natural scenery upon us. What scenery painting is to space that drama is to time. Events covering many years are presented

to us within a space of two or three hours, with this additional advantage that in the drama we get the essence of things without being bothered with non-essential, dreary, humdrum, common-place details. So there is an indication of the possibility of getting beyond the limitation of time.

Shakespeare called the world a stage and men and women mere players. This can be reversed and we may as well say that the stage is a world, perhaps a miniature world, and the actors represent typical men and women and the actions are typical experiences of humanity. Generally a dramatist worth the name has a lot of intuition playing about him. In his characters and events of the drama, the artist places before us great types and by studying and following the development of the theme as portrayed by the dramatist we can in a way vicariously experience the joys and sorrows of other people without ourselves having to go through those experiences. This is one of the most important aspects of the dramatic art. A Yogi also in a way is able to have vicarious experiences through his identification with other people. There is, however, this difference: both the Yogi and the dramatist go through these experiences in an impersonal sort of way, as *sakshi*.

From what has been said above, it will be seen that a great drama is a permanent record of the essence of the events which occur in the world at various times and in various places. In actual history an event occurs at a particular place, at a particular time and involves a particular set of people. Therefore, a historical event is conditioned by these factors of time, space and the people involved. But a dramatic presentation of that event is a permanent record left with us by a great artist for our benefit. This sensing of the permanent among the impermanent things and events of the world is a characteristic of both the Yogi and the dramatist.

I may also refer to the aspect, common to Yoga and drama, of enabling us to go beyond pairs of opposites. Both these have a faculty of synthesis which helps them to reconcile apparently opposite factors and getting a synthesis out of them. One object of Yoga is to achieve such a synthesis, to realise unity in diversity, to realise a common basis behind pairs of opposites. Drama enables us to achieve such a sort of synthesis of the opposites, joy and sorrow. When we enjoy a tragedy we are unconsciously transmuting even sorrow into joy. It is a common experience that when we witness a tragedy enacted by expert actors we put ourselves *en rapport* with the actors' experiences, the deep sorrows of the tragic character; we even experience the physical ractions, such as choking of the throat, eyes brimming with tears and so on. When again that tragedy is being enacted somewhere we yearn to witness it and again we go through all these experiences of sorrow in ourselves. Is this not apparently a riddle? We do experience all those sorrows and want to re-experience them many times. Why? Because in that experience of sorrow we get an aesthetic happiness. In other words we are able to squeeze out some joy out of that very sorrow. This is possible because we experience these sorrows impersonally without getting entangled in them, and so it is possible by maintaining an impersonal attitude to synthesise even such opposites as joy and sorrow. Aesthetic enjoyment of a tragedy is a striking example of this possibility and this is one aspect of Yoga.

Thus, we see that there are many elements common to Yoga and the dramatic art. It is no wonder that in India, Art was considered to be a Yoga.

27. My Drama Reminiscences

A characteristic feature of the modern times is wild rush and hurry and consequently excitement. Living as we do in the midst of it, we may not realise it in full: but a

little detached view of what is happening around and a comparison of the same with the conditions that obtained about half a century ago will clearly show that a tremendous change has come about in the conditions of our life during these fifty years. Things are moving fast and we want them to move faster still. About 50 years ago, in my youth, people generally walked from place to place, then a bullock bandy was a luxury, horse carriage was used only by the aristocratic few; motor cars were not heard of except perhaps in cities. Those were spacious times, life moved gently and smoothly and people generally lived contented lives I am not sure whether people of those times were not more happy than we with all the so-called modern "conveniences and gadgets". What changes have come about in our lives! When I think of those days and the present time, I have a nostalgic yearning to relive those days. But that is evidently not possible now. In every walk of life and in every human activity this tremendous change from simplicity and grace to complexity and excitement is noticeable.

Being in a reminiscent mood I wish to call back to my mind memories of my early association with dramatic activity. When I first appeared on the stage as Shakuntala in 1906, in the drama "Shakuntalam" put on boards by the Young Men's India Association of Lalgudi in Tiruchi District, we had very little stage equipment, very few make-up requisites and practically no lighting facilities. We generally chose a school hall for the play with a stage improvised at one end with a number of tables. We used to borrow one or two curtains and a few side screens from some professional company or some people who used to hire out such things. Lighting was provided by some powerful kerosene lamps—these were replaced by gas lights later—hung in front of the stage. As for make-up we were blissfully ignorant of any ready-made things or paint sticks or eye-brow pencil or spirit gum. Cropped heads were rare in those

days and so for lady characters we were using what was called "half-tope", just some hair or chowri designed to cover the shaved portion—generally 3 to 4 inches broad—of the forehead; and for male characters there was little need even for such a simple contrivance. For powdering the face we used the yellow powder (a compound of sulphur) then used by professionals (called "Aritharam" in Tamil); some black smear supplied the moustache and hair near the temples. Our homes supplied most of our dresses and jewels. In those days almost all of us (males and ladies) used to have our ear-holes bored for ear ornament, so there was not much difficulty in wearing an ear ring. Of course lady characters were represented by men on the stage — a lady acting on the stage along with men was unthinkable. There was one snag however in regard to the royal robes of kings and princes. It was the custom (or fashion) then for royalties to wear what was called "jimki-suit", velvet suit embroidered with glittering pieces of tiny glass tubes. This tinsel will shine and glitter in the light and dazzle the onlookers. Naturally such a dress will be heavy to wear, but we did not mind—why, in fact we did not mind many other things as well.

Orchestra was provided generally by a harmonist who will himself sing and a drummer, both placed on one side of the stage, behind the side screen and hence invisible to the audience. Later on, it became the fashion to have the harmonist on the stage itself at one end so that he was in full view of the audience all the time. What I am saying here about the amateur theatricals is more or less applicable to the professional stage of those days as well. Orchestra in the pit in front of the stage, foot-lights and such other improvements came in later. From what I have said our amateur theatre might appear rather crude; well, whatever deficiency there might have been was made up by the enthusiasm and whole-heartedness of our members. Within a few

years we effected great improvement in our equipments. Some of our members got into touch with some amateur organisation at Madras and others with some of the professionals in the art. We introduced wigs (half and full), grease paints, eye-brow pencil, nose paste, spirit gum, crepe hair, etc. We also improved our stage arrangements but the harmonist still continued to sit on the stage in full view of the audience.

As for music, we had plenty of it, the professional stage was more or less our standard and music was used in plenty, in and out of season. There used to be what were then called the 'entrance song' and 'exit song' for almost every important character, and on the professional stage of those times, singing characters, whatever be their proper position on the stage used to go near the harmonist whenever they had to sing. Some characters like Narada used to indulge even in swaras and other musical acrobatics on the professional stage. Even in recent times, in one of our talkies we had Narada and Krishna taking turns in singing swaras for a classical composition. But we tried to steer clear of several of these defects; still we used to have plenty of music.

It was in connection with the work of composing songs for the various characters that I first discovered my own ability—though quite rudimentary at the time—to compose music. Practically I had to compose the songs for all the characters.

In those days we used to act Indian plays in English (Sir William Jone's *Shakuntalam*, Vasudea Rao's *Chandrahasa* and so on) and also occasionally Tamil plays. By that time, thanks to P. Sambanda Mudaliar, Suryanarayana Sastri and other pioneers, we had a number of plays written in Tamil for the stage. The pioneering work of P. Sambanda Mudaliar in this direction can never be over-estimated.

When I went to Travancore early in 1910 I was naturally on the look-out for amateur organisations interested in Tamil plays. There were one or two organisations occasionally putting on the boards some Malayalam plays. Though many Tamil professional troupes visited Trivandrum and were much patronged by the public and Royalty and though there were local organisations consisting mainly of Tamil speaking people, there was not one society interested in Tamil dramas. One of these associations of mainly Tamilians used to enact one play in English every year at the time of the Maharajah's birthday. Generally it was an Indian play written in English. This was their only dramatic activity for the year. I found however that they had plenty of talent which could be harnessed for sustained high class dramatic activity. When I suggested to them the idea of acting Indian dramas in Tamil periodically they were simply thunderstruck. "What? An amateur to act in a Tamil play! Unthinkable. No decent educated man will "stoop" to act in Tamil, that is only for the professional people; we can never dream of appearing on the stage and speaking in Tamil". That is what I was told. I explained to them that in other parts of South India there were societies of "decent educated" people who were doing it and were being encouraged and patronised by the "educated" public also. I told them also about my own activities in that line. But no! they would not countenance the idea. It was not that they personally disapproved of the idea but they were afraid that the public would not approve of it and would look down upon the actors if they acted in Tamil. Then I gave them a short account of the activities of the Lalgudi Y.M.I.A.—it may be incidentally stated that this Y.M.I.A. was started 8 years before the Madras Y.M.I.A. was started by Dr. Annie Besant. One of the prominent members of the Trivandrum organisation then suggested, "If perhaps some amateur organisation from outside Travancore consisting of 'decent educated' persons come here and enact

plays in Tamil, it is quite possible that this prejudice on the part of the public could be removed and then the way will be open for us amateurs to act Tamil plays". I offered to bring the Lalgudi Y.M.I.A. troupe to Trivandrum and have a series of plays enacted. Accordingly I arranged for the Lalgudi troupe to visit Trivandrum next year and act three plays. We had vakils, doctors, professors, headmasters and such "decent, educated" people among our troupe. I was able to get the patronage of H.H. Sri Mulam Tirunal Maharaja. The Dewan, Sir P. Rajagopalachari, greatly helped me too. Also we had good dignified and intellectual audiences. The venture was a great success. When the people saw professors, judges, doctors and advocates acting Tamil plays the old prejudice died instant death and they began to ask for Tamil plays. Thus was initiated in Trivandrum amateur Tamil dramatic activity. I shall pass over the early stages. I even now remember what a great surprise it was to the friends there when I introduced "improved ways" of make-up in the shape of paint sticks, spirit gum, full wigs and so on.

The audience see the drama on the stage in front of the curtain but for us the real drama is behind the curtain, on the stage and in the green room. Compared to this drama "behind the scenes" the drama witnessed in front of the curtain fades into dull insignificance. I can recall a number of such dramatic happenings behind. I have already referred to the "jimki suit" decorated with tinsel glass tubes. One of our members who was dressed for a prince's part (naturally in such a suit) was accustomed to using snuff and after drawing in a pinch of snuff it was his habit to wipe off the scattered particles of the snuff by just rubbing the left forearm across the nose. When he was about to enter the stage, he had his pinch of snuff—perhaps to put him in the proper mood—and by sheer force of habit he ran his left arm across his nose. Unfortunately the tips of

some of the glass tubes of his dress came into rather violent contact with the nose and tore away some flesh from it and blood began to spurt out in plenty. One can easily imagine the subsequent commotion, some of us in perhaps lighter vein positively enjoyed the discomfiture of the "prince". His nose was duly attended to and we could not avoid some delay.

On another occasion a friend was acting the part of Siva; our green room Director was saying that snake ear ornament was a necessary requisite for that part. But that actor, strangely enough, had no holes in his ear-lobes. The Director however assured him that the matter could be managed somehow with some spring arrangement. So the actor got dressed up and there was nothing more to be done except putting on the snake ear ring. Our green room Director was a sport; he had the snake ornament ready and under the pretext of fixing it up with a spring he actually pierced the ear lobe with a thin wire sharpened at end for that very purpose. The actor's reaction may easily be visualised he gave a wild shriek and jumped. But we all laughed, the green room expert had whispered a hint to us as to what he had in his mind. The actor was infuriated, but what to do? He could not undo what had been done, and he could not appear on the stage with the ornament only on one ear; so he had to submit himself to the other ear-lobe also being pierced. Thus his ear-boring ceremony was performed that day.

I remember vividly another occasion of a distinctly dramatic character. We were enacting Chandrahasa, and in the last scene Madana, son of Dushtabuddhi, is killed by mistake; and round his corpse spooks and ghosts gather and dance with joy as they had a human corpse to feast themselves upon. Now, our stage was put up with a number of school room tables. Though carefully chosen and arranged these tables had small interspaces between them. The friend

Muthia Bhagavatar and Vedanta Bhagavatar. Due to this popularity several "Bhagavatars" began to enter this field, whether they were competent to do it or not. As used to be remarked then, these novices converted the Katha into a "standing kacchery"—concert of standing musicians!

The chief object of Katha is usually to impart religious instruction, including of course, any kind of moral teaching. But it is not merely that. It is very much more. If I may put it, it is a didactic Art in the sense that it is an Art used for didactic purposes. In drama also there is this didactic element. But Katha can be Art and may be made an Art. After all, Katha is only monodrama. In it we have all the elements which go to make a good drama. Even without music Katha can be made to assume an artistic value by properly handling the theme and working it out on the basic principles underlying dramatic Art. Here again, music is of great value and certainly goes a very long way to make the Katha effective not only as story telling but also as a great Art. In this aspect of Kathakalakshepam music plays a very important part, and hence one cannot be too careful in fitting music into Kathakalakshepam. Being a monodrama, the Kathakalakshepam worked on the basis of Art presents great difficulties which are easily got over on the stage. On the stage we depend for effect upon not only the capacity of the actor, but on several elements which go to make the complete whole. We have the different characters, dressed and made up to look as nearly as possible the personages they represent, there is the stage setting, the scenery, the colour scheme, all of which tend to produce the dramatic illusion into which the audience fall. This makes the work of the actor easy and helps him to a large extent in producing the required effect. But in the case of Kathakalakshepam the performer has none of these conveniences on hand. He has to depend upon himself and his resourcefulness. Here lies the real difficulty in perform-

ing a Kathakalakshepam as a piece of Art. The performer has to be an actor and an actor of no mean parts. He has to act not only one part but several parts, and he has to do this without any dress or make-up or back-ground or other stage settings. But still a good performer should be able to produce the necessary dramatic effect if he pays attention tos ome of the essential points which have to be borne in mind in this connection.

Let me here enumerate some of these points which I have found very useful myself.

(1) When we choose a story for the Kathakalakshepam, be it Puranic or not, it has to be carefully worked in different stages as in a drama. I generally work it out in a number of scenes, choosing the essential situation in each scene and working up the part of the story pertaining to that scene to the climax. Shortening or lengthening will only depend upon hurrying through or dropping or elaborating some of these scenes. Of course, there will be some scenes on which the whole story stands and we cannot afford to touch them. In introducing different parts of the story and presenting them as scenes to the audience great care should be taken to give an effective description of the particular scene, something like a word picture, so that the audience, though they are not in front of a stage with all the necessary setting, feel almost as if they are witnessing that scene.

(2) Except where the description of the kind referred to above is involved, it is desirable to avoid indirect form of narration as far as possible. I have very often seen some effective story telling being spoiled by the indirect narration adopted by the performer. If you act the different persons who are coming in a particular situation properly, you can avoid to a very large extent the need for indirect narration.

(3) Again, as in the case of the drama, the musical element must be very carefully chosen. Being a monodrama,

Kathakalakshepam requires that every song introduced into it must be carefully introduced, tunes and talas being properly chosen. As Kathakalakshepam is not a musical concert (though several performers are trying to convert Kathakalakshepams into concerts of an extremely technical nature) care should be taken to avoid unnecessary technical pieces which involve a high degree of musical proficiency and which in a Kathakalakshepam are likely to mar the total effect. Elaborate Ragalapana, singing swaras, introducing too many standard kirtanas in and out of season, giving too many occasions for the display of the drummer's skill, all these have to be avoided if Kathakalakshepam is to be a work of Art.

Also every song must be carefully worked into the narration. It should not appear to be an interpolation. It must be so worked that the audience do not feel where the prose ends and the music begins. Very often musical pieces are introduced after a sudden stop and the narration begins again after some interval after the music is over. This takes away much of the effect. Of course, I am not a puritan to advocate the total abolition of extraneous music from the Katha. Where there is a natural break in the development of the story we may certainly have extraneous musical pieces even of a technical nature with swaras and mridangam display and all that. But it is not an essential part of the Katha. It is only something like an interlude in a drama —something like a "curtain raiser."

Another point to note in this connection is to avoid as far as possible having to expound the meaning of the musical pieces sung, except where the language of the piece is different from the vernacular of the major portion of the audience. By properly mouthing the words of the song accompanied by the necessary gestures one can convey easily the meaning of the piece to the audience. As a rule, except where the words are abstruse, songs in local verna-

:ulars ought to be left without any commentary or anno-ation. This again involves care in introducing songs.

(4) The use of proper gestures by the performer is ı matter of a very great importance. Katha being a mono-drama, it is essential that the performer should carefully choose his gestures in dealing with the various personages of the story. The gestures ought to be suggestive, graceful and natural. Necessity for narration, for expounding musical pieces and such other things can be very easily avoided and the effect enhanced considerably by the use of gestures. The Katha performer has perforce to be an actor of parts.

(5) The accompaniments must be absolutely secondary. I am one of those who think that even in a musical concert the accompaniments should not be allowed to usurp places not meant for them. In a Kathakalakshepam the reasons are all the greater. Music on the whole is only a handmaid to the monodrama. If the accompaniments of the musical part of the Katha are allowed to dominate, the effect will be anything but artistic. In some situations it may be even necessary to disregard the accompaniments altogether. In some pathetic or very quick moving situations the performer may have to get on without any regard to the accompaniments. This is a point which needs very careful consideration at the hands of performers who wish to make the Kathakalakshepam a real Art.

(6) To make the Art side of the Katha prominent it is also necessary to see that too many long sermons on ethical principles should be avoided. Even where the story brims with situations convenient for such appeals they must be made very dramatically and not become sermons or lectures. The obvious moral lessons will easily go home to the people even without the performer's sermonising upon them, if he had worked the story carefully and effectively. At times, the point goes home to the audience more effectively unsaid than by a long detailed peroration from the

performer. Where it is possible, even this moral may be left to some of the characters to bring out.

(7) One aspect which has to be kept in mind, but which is usually forgotten nowadays, is that the music of the Katha is of a distinctive character, it has its own "Melam", unique to the institution. The tunes best fitted for a Katha are of the type used in Maharatta countries—Saki, Dindi, Anjanagita, Savai, Ghanakshari and so on. These are simple, crisp and effective tunes. Jalar, Kulitalam (with its own sweet tinkling sound) and chapla are essential to produce the proper atmosphere. It is essential to maintain this Katha "atmosphere" throughout. Also in doing the talam, time is not measured as in a concert by beats and pauses. Generally Desadi and Ushitalam are used. Very often 7-beat talams (ezhadi talam, as it is called) are also employed. The effect of these is tremendous, as anyone who has heard will realise. Of course, it requires some training to use these talas with ease and skill. In my own view, no one can take to Katha performing who is not used to these tala varieties which make the very life of the institution. Also there are some typical moharas or muthyppus in mridangam which are characteristic of the Katha-melam. It is very unfortunate that these are going out of use nowadays. The All India Radio is to some extent responsible for these specialities getting out of use; in their studios there do not seem to be available accompanists who can provide these features distinctive to the Katha music.

The Kathakalakshepam item in the All India Radio is becoming almost a farce; it is not a concert which you can cut short as you like; it is an organic whole, several parts of it are woven into a set pattern. But for this the story telling will become an insipid, flat affair. One cannot work out the whole without building up the various parts so as to fit them in the general structure. Generally speaking, to perform a Katha in 45 minutes is converting it into

a ritual or formality to be gone through just to fill the time. This elementary point seems to have been ignored by the All India Radio.

I have tried to throw out some of the ideas which came to my mind in thinking about this subject. Kathakalakshepam has appealed to me more as an Art than as mere story-telling. Of course devotion has to be given a prominent place. One finds it easier at times to produce a devotional atmosphere through music than by mere story telling, and dramatic presentation proves also very helpful in adding to the devotional aspect. I feel that this aspect of the Katha requires a little more attention at the hands of the performers than is given to it at present.

Kathakalakshepam is a glorious institution in the cultural life of India, meant to keep alive the soul of the nation. Once it was a very popular institution. Most unfortunately its popularity has declined of late; this is not a healthy sign. Our greatness lies in our special culture and not in spurious imitations. And this institution was a very powerful factor in our cultural life. True patriotism and reverence for our ancient culture require that this art should not be allowed to decline or degenerate into a mere money-making affair. While our Music Sabhas go in for all kinds of shows of doubtful usefulness they do not seem to give sufficient encouragement to this art. If there is proper demand there will be adequate supply also. Let me hope that our Sabhas will become more alive to their responsibility in this matter.

29. The Place of Art in Education

The true object of education is to develop human personality in all its aspects. Any over-emphasis on a particular aspect to the neglect of another may lead to a kind of lop-sided development which in the long run may do more harm than good. There was a time in our educational history when emphasis was laid only upon the intellectual develop-

ment of the student. In those days there was very little attention paid even to physical development. Latterly they began to consider the importance of physical instruction so much so that one's proficiency in sports was given great weight in selecting candidates for certain appointments. But man is not merely his intellect and his physical body. He is very much more. He is a composite being whose real existence is far above and deeper than the merely physical and mental aspects. He has his emotions which play a more vital part in his development and the development of his nation than is ordinarily recognised. It is often said that we are mostly led by our sentiments and our intellect comes in only to supply valid reasons for what we decide to do in response to the promptings of our sentiments. Over and above all this, man is an immortal soul whose progress all the other factors of his existence serve to help.

Unfortunately the development of human emotions has not received that attention which is due to it in our educational institutions. In one sense it may be said that the present dead-lock in world affairs is to a large extent due to the lop-sided development of human personality referred to above. All emphasis was laid on head development while the heart of humanity was allowed to starve. It is this over-development of the head at the expense of the heart that has gone a long way to supply the psychological basis for our modern troubles. If there had been a balanced progress of the head and the heart, human nature would have developed certain fundamental moral values which would have made it impossible for the present world muddle to have come about. It is, therefore, necessary that the heart development of the pupil should receive very great attention at the hands of the educationalists. I am reminded in this connection of a great Chinese proverb which says, "If you have two loaves. sell one and buy a lily". The impli-

cation is obvious. Do not concentrate your attention on only food and drink, but pay equal attention to the development of your aesthetic nature. If the aesthetic nature of man is ignored, he will slide back to the animal kingdom. There is an old Sanskrit verse which says that a man who is without any taste for music, literature and other fine arts is verily a beast. What distinguishes a man primarily from a beast is this aesthetic faculty.

We speak of culture as signifying an all-round development of human faculties. It has been said that science is curiosity about life, art is wonder at life, philosophy is an attitude towards life and religion is reverence for life. True culture includes all these four aspects and a cultured man ought to show development along all these four lines. Einstein said: "The most beautiful and most profound emotion we can experience is the sensation of the Mysterious. It is the source of all true science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who could no longer wonder and stand wrapped in awe, is as good as dead." This sense of wonder is the basis of true culture.

It is, therefore, obvious that education in aesthetics is as essential as, if not more than, mere intellectual or physical education. Man can never be complete or balanced or harmonious unless his emotions are trained, developed and sublimated, and here comes in the need for introducing art in our educational curriculum as a compulsory subject. The true function of all arts is to train our emotional nature, harmonise it and then sublimate it so that an instinctive feeling to decide what is good, what is true and what is beautiful may be developed. Art enables one to sense the essence of things not merely as they seem but as they really are. To the artist, every object or event is not merely what it appears but represents a thought in the mind of God. When he looks at an object he not merely looks at it but through it into the Idea behind of which

that object or event is an expression, however faint; and so the objective world has a new meaning for him, reveals more to him than to the ordinary man. He is thus enabled to think in terms of types (archetypes, as Plato called them) in the mind of God. This helps him to achieve a synthesis which the analytical methods of intellectual science will rarely help him to achieve. A type in the mind of God is revealed down here in myriads of forms representing that type, multiplicity below and unity above — this is what the artist is enabled to feel and realise. This is best seen especially in portrait-painting where the portrait (painted by a real artist) does not only represent the person as he appeared to be at the moment he was observed but the person as he generally is (which means his general character and temperament) and what that person is in the mind of God.

Art refines our nature and creates an instinctive sense of fitness of things. It helps discipline without any formal rules of discipline. I may mention here an experiment tried by Madame Montessori in one of her schools in Milan. This is what she says: "I had tried to have a Directress of 'Children's House' in Milan who is a gifted musician make a number of trials and experiments.............. She was greatly surprised to discover the effect of such music.....................She now noticed that as she multiplied and repeated the rhythm exercises the children little by little left off their ugly jumping, until finally it was a thing of the past. The Directress one day asked for an explanation for this change of conduct...................The older children gave various replies, whose meaning was the same.

'It is not nice to jump',

'Jumping is ugly',

'It is rude to jump'.

This was certainly a beautiful triumph for our method."

Many problems of discipline might be solved to some extent by introducing art training as part of the educational curriculum. I am reminded of what the late Sir C. R. Reddi said in inaugurating one of the Music Conferences in Travancore. At that time some Indian politicians were going to attend some War Council meeting in London. Mr. Reddi said that if instead of sending politicians they would send some top-ranking musicians and if the War Council proceedings started with their music, there would in all probability be no war at all. A great change takes place in human nature in a mysterious manner through art education. Of course, I do not mean that in our schools we should train professional musicians and artists any more than we train professionals in other walks of human life. We are here to open up the hidden faculties in a human being and give full play to good ones and transmute the undesirable ones into desirable ones. A man of heart, despite his numerous failings and lapses will one day become a saint. But a man who is intellectually arrogant may not be able to achieve this. In our institutions we should provide facilities for unfolding the aesthetic nature in the young ones entrusted to our care. They should develop art sensibility, power to appreciate art and beauty — or to put it in short, become a cultured citizen.

30. Some Languishing Arts of India

(a) KATHAKALAKSHEPAM

The essential basis of Indian Culture is Religion in the widest and most general sense of the word. An intuitive conviction that the Divine is immanent in everything permeated every phase of our life. Religion in some form or other played a part in every activity. In olden times temples were not only places of worship but were also centres of various human activities—artistic, social, political and so on. Temples inspired sculpture, architecture, music and poetry;

panchayat courts usually met in temples; even shops were usually situated in and around the temples. Therefore our leaders founded many institutions to keep alive the religious spirit in the minds of the people. Among these the *Bhajanas* and the *Kathakalakshepams* (in their earlier form as *Puranapatanam*) were prominent. There was practically no village without a *Bhajanamatham*; and day in and day out there were *Bhajanas* and *Kalakshepams* reminding the people all the time about the higher and more lasting things in life.

The modern *Kathakalakshepam* was an evolution of the old *Puranapatanam* as a result of the impact of the *Sankirtan* from the Maharashtra country. It was shaped as a definite art form by Tanjore Krishna Bhagavatar of hallowed memory. Tiruppayanam Panchapagesa Sastriar gave his own distinctive touch to it and made it a synthesis of *Wisdom* and *Art*. We are supposed to follow this pattern since.

It became very popular and thousands used to gather to listen to *Kathas*. They kept alive the religio-moral as well as the aesthetic instincts in the people. It was more in demand than even music, so much so that prominent concert musicians like Palghat Anantarama Bhagavatar, Harikesanallur Muthia Bhagavatar and Kallidaikurichi Vedanta Bhagavatar took to performing *kathas* in preference to giving concerts. During the last two decades or so, however, a change — subtle and therefore more dangerous — seems to have come in the general outlook, taste and sense of values of our people. I do not propose to stress this point further. We find the effect of this subtle change in almost every phase of our national life. The old instinctive sense of right and wrong, of good and bad, based on our basic culture, is slowly deteriorating. In reality this is the greatest danger to our national life. The late Dr. J. H. Cousins once remarked that a nation without its own distinctive culture awaits its transport to the burning ghat. I feel that his is

not an overstatement; it is literally true. The soul of a nation finds expression in her culture which in turn seeks expression in her arts.

Now where is the old status enjoyed by the *Katha* and why is it languishing now? There are perhaps one or two persons who still keep to the old style and purpose of the *katha*. But generally a modern *katha* is a parrot-like repetition of a hotch-potch of indifferent music and low-class humour. Why this unfortunate situation? It may be argued that the right type of people competent to give a really good and effective *katha* performance is not available. This may be true. But the real cause is that the situation is working in a vicious circle. In every human activity there is the inevitable relation between the supply and the demand. If people really demand a good *katha* then good *katha* performances will be in the supply. The general vitiation in the taste and the religio-moral sense is the root cause. The effect of this vitiation can be seen in several other phases of national life too.

The position to which this noble institution has been relegated can be realized from the place accorded to it in our Radio programmes. To a music concert they allot 90 minutes while only 60 minutes are given for a *katha*. A concert can be adjusted to any duration by adding or omitting a few songs. But a *katha* is a theme developed as an organic whole; situations have to be dramatically worked up and it requires time to accomplish this with the aid of narration and appropriate music. It stands to reason that generally more time should be given for *kathas* than for mere concerts. But most of the *Katha* items in the Radio programme are tending to become a matter of formality and they are rarely well balanced and effective. *Kathakalakshepam* is a composite art, combining as it does the elements of the drama, the dance, music and story-telling. In the interests of the preservation of our distinctive national tradi-

tional culture this institution has to be restored to its rightful place.

I do not wish to go further into details in the matter of this restoration. I shall simply mention one point. The music for the *katha* has its own special features; it should not become a concert; the tunes of songs, the way in which *talam* (cymbals) is handled—*yezhadi* and *usi talams* as they are called—and the short *moharas* (winding up) on *mridangam*, all these give to the *katha* a distinctive atmosphere.

(b) BOMMALATTAM (PUPPET-DRAMA)

I remember how in my younger days I used to sit out whole nights witnessing *Bommalattam*, thoroughly lost in the aesthetic enjoyment of the show, at times weeping with the characters and at other times bursting into boisterous laughter at some of the humorous situations. The stage set-up was quite simple, a small cadjan roofed shed right in the middle of a street or lane; a platform about 5 feet high, partitioned across by a black curtain about four feet in height. The puppets will do their parts in front of this curtain handled suitably by persons from behind it. It requires great skill and experience to manipulate the puppets with the aid of black strings and in some cases thin iron rods. As a lad, I have seen these puppets, their dresses and the manipulating strings during day time; a troupe of players were camping next to my house in Srirangam and they were kind enough to explain the secrets of their job to my great surprise and admiration. It is a wonderful art. But we rarely hear of such shows now Pity of pities.

(c) TALA DISPLAY

Here I would also like to refer to another art (a very minor art) which has almost disappeared. We have now for a music concert *tala* accompaniments like *Mridangam*, *Kanjira*, *Ghatam*, *Moorsing* (Jews harp) and so on. These

are given independent chances for display. We used to have small cymbals as an accompaniment, specially in *Bhajanas*; and they were given independent chance for display like *mridangam* and *kanjira*. I have seen experts handling the cymbals with striking dexterity and working out complicated rhythm patterns with them to the wonder and delight of the audience. This has disappeared almost completely. This is a lamentable loss.

(d) KOLAM (RANGOLI)

Another minor art which is languishing is the minor domestic art called *kolam* in the south, *alpona* in Bengal, *Rangoli* in other parts of north India and referred to in ancient books as *Rangavalli* or *Shaktichitra* or *Dhoolichitra*. Though a minor matter, it was a potent factor in keeping alive the artistic instinct and sensibility in our girls and ladies. I have seen young girls competing with ont another in making new designs. I may confess that in my younger days I was much fascinated with this art, and I used to work out designs and actually draw the Kolam in my house. On the days of temple festivals when the Deity Sri Ranganatha used to be taken in procession along the streets ladies used to draw kolam designs in the streets in front of their houses. And I used to monopolise all the available spaces in front of my house and fill the whole space with designs including the figure of the vahana (lion or horse or elephant or swan as the case may be) of the Deity on that particular day, much to the surprise, tingled perhaps with touches of admiration and envy, of the ladies and girls in the neighbouring houses. Unfortunately this seems to be going out of fashion. Even in villages this tends to become a mere formality. I know there are books on sale professedly giving various designs for kolam; but they are in the first place many of them, not artistic and secondly they only add to the already increasing tendency to laziness and mere imita-

tion at the expense of creative art impulse inherent in every Indian woman.

(e) NAVARATRI KOLU

Before concluding I wish to refer to another institution which is gradually receding from the original artistic motive which played an important idea in the festivities. I mean the *Navaratri* festival. In our country, in all our festivals festival. In our country, in all our festivals and other institutions art, like religion, played an important part. This is but natural, as in our culture religion and art went hand in hand. In a sense we may say that religion turned outwards is art and art turned inwards is religion; religion leads us to the God within and art reveals God in Nature. I have felt always that Navaratri is an occasion when the art instinct in our ladies may be given full play. There may be dolls and pictures; but arranging things with a view to beauty, planning ways to accentuate the beauty of line, form, colour and so on was the real purpose, at least one of the purposes of a Navaratri show. I had always advocated that as far as possible the things arranged in the *Kolumandapam* should be things made by ourselves or made under our direction and according to designs supplied by us. In my house I used to lay great insistence on this and gradually the *Kolumandapam* developed into some sort of art exhibition. In course of time most of the articles exhibited turned out to be home-made things. Somehow to me the *Kolu* suggested primarily an art exhibition and Navaratri was a great occasion for the display of natural artistic talents in our ladies. Unfortunately, of late, while the festival has become a big show there is very little to give the right tone to it and remind us of our great national culture. All kinds of dolls and other things which are un-Indian in both form and idea are arranged under the glare of multi-coloured electric lights; the whole show is lurid,

flashy, fantastic and at times disturbing to our sense of fitness and proper atmosphere. I wish a few of us take this matter up seriously and make Navaratri an occasion for the art instinct in our ladies to find expression along right lines and create the true Indian atmosphere of Truth, Holiness and Beauty—*Satyam, Sivam, Sundaram.*

Part III

GENERAL

31. The Nature and Function of Intuition

To understand the real function of intuition *vijnan* we must know the constitution of man. Man has his purely physical nature and with it the vitality principle. Then he has his desires and the concrete mind. Beyond these there is the abstract mind or, as it is called, the formless Manas. Beyond this again there are the Buddhi and the Spirit of man, and so on. Intuition really begins where the sphere of operation of the concrete mind ceases. In this age when the lower mind dominates all our activities it is quite natural that the function of intuition is not properly recognized.

The function of intuition is so much at variance with that of the concrete mind that it is almost difficult for an ordinary intellectual man to value intuition at its proper worth. Intuition is something like a sudden illumination, it floods all the aspects of man and gives a perception remarkable in its width and depth. To illustrate the difference between the function of the mind and that of intuition, let us consider how the mind works. The process employed by the mind is essentially analytical while intuition is fundamentally synthetic. The mind perceives through various senses the outer phenomena, collects them, tabulates them, arranges them, and from all these data, draws inferences, and these inferences are stated as scientific laws. Obviously, no scientific law can be absolute Truth. A law may hold good for a long time, but if a new phenomenon turns up which disobeys the law, the law has to be so altered as to explain the new phenomenon also. That has been the way of all scientific advancement. But intuition works in a different way. In some mysterious way in which

imagination plays an important part, it gets at the truth in a flash without having to go through all the intermediary stages incidental to analysis. Suppose I am led into a dark room and asked to prepare a list of all the articles in that room. Being in the dark I cannot see anything in that room, but I shall grope my way about, contact with my senses the various objects, and laboriously make out a catalogue of all the articles in that room. Still there is a possibility of my catalogue being defective or even erroneous. But suppose that I have an electric torch in my hand, and I switch it on. Then the whole room is visible to my gaze and I have only to perceive what all there is in the room without moving or groping about. This more or less illustrates the essential difference between mind and intuition. Intuition is something like the electric torch. If one is able to use it one knows things by a sudden illumination rather than by laborious mental processes.

Intuition may be said to be of two kinds. Now, I was speaking of the abstract mind beyond the concrete mind. The peculiar feature of the abstract mind is that it does not deal so much with forms as the concepts which are clothed in various forms. While there may be thousands of chairs in the world, the idea of the chair, *i.e.*, the abstract chair, is only one. You may draw millions of triangles but the quality of the triangle or that which makes a triangle what it is, the idea behind all these various triangles, is only one. In other words, the abstract mind deals in types out of which numberless forms are built in the concrete mind. It follows from this that the abstract mind is in one sense a synthesizing agent getting at the one idea behind various forms which clothe the idea. Intuition, at times, comes from the region of this abstract mind. While we are struggling here with various forms without being able to get at the common type behind, intuition may flash down and give us the idea. It is the play of such an

intuition that enabled great men of the world to formulate laws or possible hypotheses which would cover a multitude of phenomena. The law of gravitation as enunciated by Newton was an act of such intuition. And again it is the play of this intuition that led to the enunciation of the famous principle of Archimedes.

Then there is a higher intuition which originates from even a higher level, the level of Buddhi, that is, the principle in man which unites the various apparently disorganized and disunited elements down here. The essence of this Buddhi is union. A person dominated by the play of Buddhi is one who always seeks unity and similarity even behind apparently irreconcilable elements. Now this faculty, when it functions, goes to the very root of things automatically, and views everything from that supreme standpoint of unity. Intuition playing from this region enables a man to put himself *en rapport* with every one and every thing in this universe. Thus he gets at the root of things and perceives everything in its true relationship, and so he is able to see things as they actually *are* and not as they *seem*. A person who is dominated by the activity of this Buddhi aspect is naturally a highly evolved soul. He lives and rules his personality from a centre which is not reached by ordinary mortals. To him everything seems to be like an open page. Apparently discordant things reveal a harmony to his eyes. Apparently insoluble problems seem quite easy of solution.

Though at present the faculty of intuition is not so normal as the faculty of mind, a time will come when the average man will have this intuition at work in him more frequently. Man is always evolving. From a piece of granite to a tree is a far cry. From a tree to an animal is a further cry. From animal to man is a still further cry. But the human Soul has evolved through all these stages in course of time, taking perhaps millions and millons of

years to pass from one step to another. Now we have reached almost the culmination of our mental development. The next step, as even the most advanced scientists say at present, is to develop a new faculty which will interpret the phenomena of this world in a new way, and that faculty is intuition. Already in cultured men and women this faculty is dawning. One may almost say that one of the essentials of a cultured human being is this faculty of intuition functioning in him at least to some extent.

When this faculty of intuition functions, its force seems to be almost irresistible. You dare not disobey its mandate. You feel so sure about it. You do not feel inclined to stop and question. But there is one danger in this matter. Very many people are merely dominated by impulse and may mistake this impulse for intuition. Some impulsive people do not stop to think. They feel so sure of their position. They go headlong into what their impulse dictates them to do. Bishop Leadbeater has suggested one or two methods by which we can distinguish impulse from intuition. In the case of impulse you will generally find something in the nature of a personal gratification involved, while intuition is essentially impersonal. Then in the case of impulse, if you fail to heed it there is generally a reaction of resentment. In the case of intuition it is not so. A third remarkable difference is that in the case of impulse, if you keep quiet for some time, it loses strength and gradually wears away. But intuition is insistent and does not lose strength by lapse of time.

One may ask how to develop intuition. Of course, it will come in due course to every one. But if we want to quicken its growth we may do it in one or two ways First, by getting into the habit of thinking more abstractly, more universally, and more in terms of types, we may develop this faculty. In fact, in all meditation, part of our

thought is directed towards this habit of abstracting our attention from the concrete world of forms into the abstract world of ideas.

Another method of rousing this faculty of intuition is through Art. Great artists are highly intuitive. In great works of art one always finds this faculty of intuition standing out. A work of real art sums up varieties of human experiences and generalizes them for us. Whether it is a portrait or a piece of sculpture or a line of poetry this quality of generalization will be evident. When a great artist paints the portrait of a person he not only paints that particular person but in some mysterious way he gets at the type to which that person belongs and represents that type also in his portrait. That is where a good portrait differs from a photographic reproduction. While the latter gives us the physical appearance of a person at a particular time, the portrait of the same person drawn by a great artist represents the real man that he is, not only what he is at a particular moment but what he has been and he is and perhaps will be in the future. The greatest dramas of the world are attempts at portraying human experiences in a generalized impersonal way. Through art one will be able to achieve in a very short time, in a sort of vicarious way, what ordinarily will take years and years to achieve in the ordinary course. Therefore those who work along the line of art will inevitably develop this faculty of sensing the type behind the forms, getting at the root of things, and generalizing particular human experiences into universal experiences. To them persons and things will appear to be much fuller and much more significant than to the ordinary individual.

Then another and perhaps a surer method is to develop the habit of perceiving similarity and unity in apparently contradictory and diverse things. This is best achieved through Love and its various phases, such as friendship,

sympathy and so on. When a person is habitually of a loving nature he will naturally work more towards unity than towards diversity. Love enables one to transcend barriers, to seek contacts in all possible ways, and to put oneself *en rapport* with other people. Through this process Buddhi is developed and therefore the higher intuition. If we develop our Buddhi and make the mind a willing and efficient tool in its hands it will be found that the quality of intuition is rapidly developed in us.

32. Some Thoughts on Mahabharata

The Mahabharata is undoubtedly one of the greatest works of the world, unique in many ways—unique for the deepest philosophic truths, for the wide range of human life covered by the ethics and for the high spiritual stimulus provided in this epic. It is sometimes called the *fifth Veda*. Vedas are said to be Divine Revelations. The Mahabharata though not technically a revelation, is more than a revelation in the nature of its contents. For one thing it contains the greatest sipirtual treasure ever known to the world, the BHAGAVAD GITA, which may be rightly called the scripture of the world. This alone will suffice to make the epic the greatest work of the world.

Apparently it is the story of a war between two rival sections of a dynasty, but it is very much more. It is the story of evolution of all life, it is a treatise on cosmogony, a code of universal ethics; it is also a history of the human race in its most general sense. All life is rooted in the One Life; the Devas, Rishis, men, beasts, flowers, rocks, why, everything in this manifested universe are all evolved from this One Life and finally go back to and get merged in that One Life. There is a Great Plan in the mind of God (Ishwara Sankalpa) and everything that was, that is and that shall be, happens in accordance with that Plan.

Human free will is part of that Plan. How the inviolability of the Divine Plan and the free will of man can be reconciled is a metaphysical problem whose solution may evade the limited intellect of man. But it is there; spiritual intuition alone can solve such problems. The Divine Plan works itself out under the great Law of Karma to which everything in manifestation conforms. Millions of souls are in manifestation and their karmic interactions make an exceedingly complicated karmic pattern. But there are Agencies in the Plan who see to it that all such interactions are balanced; all karmic debts repaid and all karmic bonds dissolved ultimately. It is an interesting study to watch how this balancing of complex karmic debts is worked out in this epic. Down here we see inexplicable happenings but their root causes are to be found in the remote past. When one takes what may be called the cosmic view point we shall find that everything falls in its own place and every occurrence has a profound significance.

Let me now consider a few specifis points coming out of this great epic. In the first place we get a glimpse of the immense wealth and the great prosperity of ancient India. When we compare that prosperity and wealth with the present-day condition our hearts will bleed at the tragic degeneration to which we have reduced ourselves. Again consider the all-round education which prevailed in those times. We are now tinkering with our educational schemes, we adopt one scheme and before we have had time to work it out fully and reap its benefits, some faddist brings in another scheme and that is adopted. The result is that the poor youth on whom these varying experiments are performed—suffers. We deplore that the products of the modern education are poor stuff. Well, it may be so, but who is responsible for it? Certainly not the poor youth. In those days the princes learnt not only literature, statecraft and military science but also the fine arts. Technical

education without humanities will make one soul-less. A man is not merely his brain or stomach; there is his heart, he has his emotions which play a more important part in his life as a *man* than mere brawn and brain. So we find Arjuna is not only a great warrior, a superb archer but an expert in music and dance. This comes in handy to him when he enters service in Virata's court as Vrihannala and teaches these arts to the princess there.

This epic brings out very forcibly the great truth of the relativity of ethics. *Dharma* has two aspects. One of these is *Sanatanadharma* which means the Eternal Law. This holds good for all time and for all the Universe; it is the basic Law of Manifestation. But what is generally meant by *Dharma* is only the application of the Eternal Law to human life. The Eternal Dharma is unchanging but the application varies with individuals, their avocations, their stages in evolution, the particular epoch in which they live; their races, their nationality and so on. The application of the Great Law in its manifold aspects is explained in detail, and in unmistakable terms in the *Shanti* and *Anusasana* parvas. Bhishma the great stands out as a teacher of Dharma. Questions after questions are put to him and he answers them all as he alone can answer.

Realisation of Unity of all that lives as the ultimate goal of life is stressed on every possible occasion. Hence we are urged to practise the great virtues of compassion, love, friendliness and charity. The story of Ushinara and the pigeon should be an object lesson to all of us. Reverence for the guru is another virtue exemplified in the story of Ekalavya.

Next perhaps only to Sri Krishna the greatest figure in the epic is Bhishma, the great teacher of Dharma, an invincible warrior and an embodiment of all human virtues. His vow of celibacy is alone enough to entitle him to a

place of unique honour. At every turn this Great Grand Sire warns Duryodhana not to rush to ruin, but his words fall on deaf ears.

Yudhishthira is another grand figure. We may learn many a truth from his triumphs and defeats, his strength and weaknesses. He was a great student of Dharma and on two occasions his proficiency in understanding Dharma is tested. Firstly, in *Sabha Parva* Narada proposes a series of questions to him which he answers ably. Again in *Vana Parva*, the Yaksha faces him with a number of complex questions (Yakshaprasna) and Yudhishthira is able to answer them all to the satisfaction of the Yaksha. But deep down in his nature lay hidden a certain element of weakness which had to be cured and Sri Krishna managed to bring it out to the surface so that it may be eradicated. We shall revert to this later.

Arjuna is another great figure in the epic, a distinctive type, intensely human but always sensitive to the inner promptings of the higher soul, the spiritual intuition in him always alert to act on the slightest whisper of his higher nature. The well-known story narrated in the epic in which Duryodhana and Arjuna both go to Sri Krishna for help and while Duryodhana chooses Krishna's army, Arjuna unhesitatingly chooses Krishna's mere company with the definite understanding that Krishna will not take any part in the warfare; this story well illustrates Arjuna's special trait. His love and regard for Sri Krishna is something unique and is revealed in various ways on various occasions. That was why he was chosen to be the recipient of the great teaching in the battlefield.

I was referring to some weaknesses in Yudhishthira. He had in his heart of hearts a lingering temptation for gambling. However much one may cover up this weakness it is there and will be there till it is rooted out. In a great soul like Yudhishthira, even a small blemish has disastrous

consequences. This is well illustrated in the episode of the gambling leading to thirteen years of exile. Nothing short of this terrific experience could cure Dharmaputra from this weakness. He had also another weakness far more subtle and hence more dangerous. This also had to be expunged from his character. The Lord accomplishes this, though the manner in which the conquest of Yudhishthira over these weaknesses is achieved may appear to be rather drastic. But in the case of Yudhishthira nothing short of it would accomplish the object. Every human soul striving for superhuman levels has to be tested and found fit before he can be allowed to rise beyond the human kingdom. Such tests are seen employed in the lives of all saints and bhaktas. This is called usually *Bhakta Pariksha*. The Lord arranges for such testing in the case of most of the spiritual aspirants who figure in the story of the great war. Let us consider the cases of Arjuna and Yudhishthira. While Arjuna passes successfully through the tests prescribed for him, Yudhishthira fails in one of the tests and recognises his failure. This recognition of his failure is the crucial point in his inner life and leads to his ultimate triumph.

During the eleventh year of the exile, Sri Krishna suggests to Yudhishthira the idea of boldly attacking Duryodhana, defeating him and winning the kingdom. A subtle hint is used to test Yudhishthira. But Yudhishthira does not yield to the temptation though the suggestion came from the Lord. His inner vision revealed the truth and he stood firm. He passed the test successfully. So also, during the war, Sri Krishna offers to enter the fight himself and defeat the Kaurava army. Everyone knew Sri Krishna's vow not to take part in the fight. Yudhishthira again saw the trap and stood firm. Yet it was this same Yudhishthira who yielded to the persuasion to utter a lie to Drona — not perhaps a *literal* lie, but a lie all the same; a sin all the more deplorable as it was sought to be covered by some

literal camouflage! He fails, but repents deeply and makes up for it later by his sustained loyalty to a dog which stuck to him to the very end. I need not here repeat in detail the well-known story of how on their final journey to Swarga the five Pandavas and Draupadi dropped dead one by one till Yudhishthira and a dog that attached itself to him and would not part from him were alone left, and how when he was invited to enter heaven he wanted the dog also to go with him and refused to enjoy the joys of Swarga without his companion dog also sharing in those joys and how at that instant the dog revealed himself as God Dharma and all entered heaven. This was the final test and Yudhishthira won.

On the other hand Arjuna also is tested but he stands his tests successfully. The first test was the choice given to him to have either Sri Krishna's army or Krishna alone without taking any part in the fight. He wins. During the fight, one day when the odds were heavily against the Pandavas and Arjuna had a very bad time and felt almost desperate Sri Krishna got his Chakra and with it in hand rushed into the battle arena. But Arjuna would not allow Krishna to break his vow; so he prevents Sri Krishna from entering the battlefield and reminds him of his vow. Again he wins. On another occasion also when Arjuna felt helpless in the fight the Lord jumps from the chariot and with his whip in hand rushes into the fighting ground. But Arjuna, helpless as he was, would not allow Krishna to break his promise and so prevents Krishna from engaging himself in the fight. So he wins again. This was his strong point; to him Sri Krishna was everything; whatever happened to himself, be it even death, he would not allow the slightest reproach to be levelled against Krishna. And so he became the favourite of Sri Krishna. Such lessons and thousands more are found scattered in this great epic. It is then too much to call it the "fifth Veda"?

33. Freedom and Discipline

Freedom! a word to conjure with! a word most widely used—rather misused! What is freedom? A bird imprisoned in a cage is let loose, we say it has become a free bird; it has attained freedom from the cage that held it captive. But has it attained real freedom? Who can say! Freedom can only be relative in this manifested world; absolute freedom is only a metaphysical abstraction. When we speak of freedom, three ideas are involved in it. Working backward, first we attain freedom; then, from what: from something which obstructed that freedom, something which cribbed us, limited our function and held us in bondage. Then thirdly, at an earlier stage we were free, unlimited, unconditioned, we enjoyed full freedom. These three ideas—attainment of freedom, the fetters from which we freed ourselves and the initial freedom which we enjoyed before we lost it—are all implied here. A fetter or bondage will have no significance unless there is in the first place a freedom which is so fettered.

We are told that in the Divine Bosom we are free, unfettered, unconditioned in the enjoyment of absolute Bliss. We have always been free in that condition. But we, as human monads, units of Divine Consciousness, chose to descend from that free blissful state and get entangled in matter down here. We need not now discuss the question "Why should we have come down at all?" Nor is it fruitful to discuss the allied question "Why should God create this Universe and send us down here?" Anyway we are here, limited and conditioned all around. Something in us urges us to seek freedom. The faint memory of our Divine nature of Bliss and Freedom spurs us, sometimes faintly and at other times insistently, to reach our true state in the Bosom of the Lord; but with this difference; originally we enjoyed Divine Freedom and Bliss only in

the Bosom of the Lord and were helpless when entangled in matter down here, but as a result of this entanglement and constant struggle to get freed from the entanglement we slowly attained mastery over matter and realised our Divinity, not only in the Divine World which is our true home but also in the world of matter. There is a significant word used in Visishtaadvaita literature in this connection. In the Divine world *Paramatma* and *Jivatma* are one, but there is this difference; the Lord has "Lakshmipatyam" which the human soul as such has not. *Lakshmipatya* means literally "Lordship of Lakshmi", that is mastery over prakriti, mastery over matter. This mastery is the prize we win as a result of the long evolutionary struggle.

So man ever seeks to be free, to be his true self. But he finds he is fettered all around. By "struggle" and experience gained as a result of that struggle he works towards and finally achieves his freedom.

Freedom from what? Freedom from fear? Freedom from want? Freedom from pain and sorrow? Yes, all this and more. On ultimate analysis all these fetters which bind us and from which we seek to get freed will be found to get reduced to one fundamental fetter, the fetter that prevents us from being what we really are, that stands in the way of our manifesting the Divine essence in us. To this fetter we may give two names according to the viewpoint we take. We are essentially Gods but have forgotten our Divinity; we are angels, but fallen angels, having forgotten our angelic nature. It is the lack of knowledge of our own Divinity—*Avidya*—that is the one fundamental basic fetter; and all other fetters like fear, pain, want are only various expressions of the basic fetter *avidya*, ignorance. Lord Buddha laid great emphasis on this *avidya* as the root of all human misery.

Viewed from another angle this fetter will appear as the fetter of separateness. When one realises his Divinity

he realises the essential Unity of all Life; and so to him there can be no sense of separateness. He is one with God and so with all life. Ignorance and separateness are only two facets of the same veil which hides Reality from us. True freedom is freedom from the sense of separateness. To put it in a positive way real freedom consists in realising the essential Unity of everything that is. Sri Sankaracharya summed it up in one sentence:

"The state of non-separateness is alone Moksha."

In our daily life absolute freedom is an impossibilty. We have absolute inner freedom undoubtedly, but this freedom expresses itself outwardly as discipline. Freedom and discipline are apparently contradictory, but this contradiction is only superficial; they can go together; in fact they co-exist in the case of advanced human beings.

Nowadays, people have fantastic ideas about freedom. Now that India has attained "freedom" people think that they are free to do what they like, that none can curb their liberty. In other words they mistake freedom for license. If everyone feels free to do what he likes there will be utter chaos and confusion, every one will jostle against every other; it will be worse than the law of the jungle. This is so obvious and yet we see this misguided idea of freedom in evidence everywhere. People are losing respect for law and order because they think that law restricts their freedom and so can be disregarded. Even traffic rules are ignored because people think that the public road is all for them forgetting that the other person who uses that road has as much liberty to think that the road belongs entirely to him. Cross road cycle conferences have become a common feature in our cities. A number of cyclists gather at a road junction and go on talking, they would not give way to a car which has to pass that way; they expect the driver to stop till their conversation

is over or to somehow manoeuvre the car across the junction. This is their understanding of freedom! Is it not obvious that my freedom is conditioned by my neighbour's freedom? In fact my freedom is conditioned by the freedoms of all the people around me. To recognise this and live a life of amity, understanding and good will is elementary commonsense.

What distinguishes the man from the beast is that he recognises this universal interdependence and orders his life accordingly. He establishes conventions, mutual understanding, laws of conduct for the welfare of the society, thereby imposing restrictions on himself for the benefit of the whole. This is real *Dharma*. The more a person or a society advances in civilisation and culture the greater these mutual restrictions. The individual willingly accepts self-imposed restrictions for the sake of the progress of the society; he makes laws and statutes to which he subjects himself. We are sure a cultured person will not do this, that and the other thing, if these go against the mutual understanding he has established with others. In other words he lives a life of discipline. This does not interfere with his inner freedom; in fact he uses his freedom to impose these restrictions on his own freedom. The highest freedom is the freedom to surrender our own personal freedom. If we are not free to surrender our freedom can we be said to be really free?

A little thought will show that the restriction of our freedom implied in any discipline is only apparent. It is really just the other way. Some thing attracts me, I am tempted to obtain and enjoy it. I am free to enjoy it and so I strive to get it for my enjoyment. I know that it is not helpful to my progress and still I seek the enjoyment of it. Another person, seeing that the object bars his progress, resists the temptation, in other words, imposes a restriction on himself not to yield to that temptation—

this is really discipline. Which of these has really exercised his freedom? In one case I have become a slave to the desire, in the other case he has resisted the temptation of the object to enslave him. It is obvious that the disciplined man has exercised his freedom while the undisciplined person has surrendered his freedom. Disciplined freedom alone is real freedom. When people talk about discipline as an inhibition curtailing one's freedom they miss an important psychological fact. Ordered outer discipline develops an inner strength which alone can ensure our being able to resist the allurements which all the time try to ensnare us, and thus makes for real freedom.

34. Highlights of Indian Culture

Culture has been defined in many ways but all the definitions leave us with a feeling that it is something more. The expression of culture varies in different countries and although the abstract basis is the same, the outward expressions vary widely. Russian culture is essentially different from Indian culture or American culture. Culture is the best expression of a nation's soul and every nation has its own distinctive expression. It is essential to have such differences; without such variety life would be drab and monotonous. There is, however, no question of superiority or inferiority in such variations.

Tolerance, especially in the intellectual field, has always been an outstanding feature of Indian culture. A person was free to think along any line and hold any view of life; there were six systems of philosophy, including even atheism. A man can deny God and be still a Hindu; he was equally free to worship a piece of stone on the wayside. It was an accepted idea that whatever path a person followed, all paths ultimately lead to the same goal. Hence it was that in ancient times there was no thought of conversion

from one religion to another; God welcomed a person whatever be the path trod by him.

Another factor which made Indian Culture a living force in life was that it assimilated and built into itself whatever was good in other cultures and thus enriched itself all along. But everything was co-ordinated and based on the great Truth of Unity of Life. This has been the rock-bottom basis of all the various facets of our culture.

Let us now consider how this culture shaped human relation in India. Culture in India has always been associated with hospitality which is one of the outstanding traits of our country. The Vedas say that a guest should be treated as God. The welcome that is given to a guest in our country is spontaneous, warm and sincere. The other aspects of our culture can be covered by what Valmiki has said of Sri Rama. In fact Sri Rama has been depicted by the poet as the embodiment of the characteristics of a cultured gentleman; and Sri Rama himself speaks of Hanuman as a perfect example of human behaviour. A special trait of Sri Rama which is of great significance is that of being *Purvabhashi*—starting conversation first and putting the other person at ease. This characteristic is distinctive to India in contrast to what obtains in the West where two persons are generally not supposed to speak to each other unless they have been properly introduced. Civilisation in our country has been based on the community as distinct from the individual as in the West. We are courteous without effort. Courtesy with us is never a pose. Being instinctively helpful and having consideration for others, are other prominent traits. A sense of perspective, making friends easily, disagreeing politely without offending people, high thinking and simple living, these are other essential Indian ideals which express our culture.

35. Temple Idea and Its Place in Religion

Temple is a common feature of all religions, whether it is called a Church, or a monastery, or a synagogue, or a mosque. From long ago man was impressed by the grandeur of the objective world around him, and the roaring thunder-clouds, the mighty mountain peaks and the lofty trees, began to inspire in him a feeling of awe and reverence, and the idea of worship in general and localised worship in particular places emerged. Be it the foot of a tree or a mountain cave that offered him what he wanted, with the idea of worship came in also the idea of a place of worship. So we find at all times in the history of man worship of God has gone hand in hand with specialised centres of worship.

Religion in general may be said to have three aspects, Theology, Rituals and Mysticism. Theology is the speculative science dealing with the nature and function of Godhead and it pertains to the thinking nature in man. Rituals on the other hand deal with certain physical processes, which in some mysterious way establish a link between the visible and the invisible. In Mysticism, we find the real yearning of the human soul to realise the Supreme, an eternal seeking and expansion. Temples have been closely related to rituals, though one could imagine ritualistic functions taking place outside temples. The real nature and purpose of the temple will be understood if we clear the position at the outset in regard to how temples function. I am not one of those who think that temples are only the expression of certain vested interests. It may be that in the present day temples do not function as efficiently as in days gone by. I am more concerned with the temple idea.

In the first place, the temple is a place of worship where people gather to think of God, pray to Him and worship Him. Though theoretically we could do this at any place and at any time, certain conveniences and environments are provided in temples which one cannot command always in other places. In most homes, quiet worship of the Supreme is almost impossible. Congregational or community worship provides an effect out of all proportion to the number taking part. There is a feeling of devotion and aspiration surging forth from the hearts of those assembled in such places of worship. If thought is a reality several minds and hearts tuned to a particular attitude of aspiration and devotion are bound to produce tremendous results.

Apart from all these things, there is an important aspect of temple which is often lost sight of when people talk about temple and temple ceremonies. Certain great centres have been chosen by Great Seers as most effective for the purpose of achieving certain definite results in the common life of a community. These are centres of great occult power and the Great Ones who founded these great centres magnetized those places, in consequence of which these centres became great channels for certain types of influences from on high to flow through them, not only to the people gathered there, but to all surrounding locality and so enable people coming under those influences to achieve what otherwise they might not have been able to accomplish. We may look upon these temples as some kind of occult laboratories. Certain physical adjustment coupled with certain systematized sounds (Mantras or music) gives rise to certain results as a matter of course and if these physical processes are properly gone through the results will be there, whosoever be the person or persons who did it, provided they have been taught the right way of doing it and also are competent to do it.

The personal character of the performer does not play any great part in the efficaciousness of such ceremonies, though a person of high character will be able to put more life into what he does and to that extent the effect will be modified and quality improved. One of the essentials for the proper conduct of such rituals is the proper ordaining of the priest or the bishop. Apostolic succession plays a great part in ritualistic processes. Even at the outset, some kind of adjustments seems to have been made between certain inner forces (Deva-Agencies) and these occult centres and it looks as if these inner forces can be tapped only by people properly ordained according to the rules of the ritual. Also the certainty of the results accruing therefrom seems to depend to a very large extent on the expertness of the performer in the employment of the physical processes and other ritualistic paraphernalia.

There are certain laws governing the operation of these occult laboratories. Just as in an ordinary science laboratory, certain conditions have to be fulfilled before the desired result is achieved, so also in these occult laboratories we have to provide the necessary favourable conditions if we wish to reap good results. For example, for certain experiments in a laboratory, light has to be shut out, certain experiments can be performed only in red light, so also in certain manufactures, it is dangerous to allow dust to come into the room; if by chance any dirt or dust gets in, it may lead to explosion and such serious consequences. So also, for certain experiments dealing with high electric power certain physical conditions have to be provided, not only to achieve the desired result, but to avoid danger.

Great occult centres like temples stand on a similar footing. Certain physical conditions have to be rigidly followed to enable those centres to fulfil their true purpose. Beyond a certain limit, no dirt or filth shall be

allowed. In some temples none shall enter the Holy of Holies except clad in wet cloth. In other temples even people belonging to the highest caste will not be allowed to go into the Holy of Holies. There are temples in Northern India, where apparently, there is no restriction; any one can go and worship in the Holy of Holies. There is a shrine where people actually go and embrace the idol. It all depends upon the type of the occult force which is radiating from the centre. There are different kinds of occult forces which demand different conditions and operation. They speak of *Ugra pratishtha* and *Saumya pratishtha.* In some cases, very strict adherence to physical purity is insisted upon, in other cases the conditions are not so rigid. But in any case, if an occult centre is to function on the lines laid down at the outset by the Great One who founded the centre, the conditions laid down by him should be fulfilled, unless an equally Great One well versed in occult lore and competent to modify the nature and function of an occult centre chooses to effect such modifications in the processes taking place through that occult centre, as he considers desirable in the wider interests of the community which was intended to be served by that centre.

But all this is the purely material aspect (I am using the word material in a comprehensive sense). Before Mysticism, neither temple nor theology is of any avail. The great purpose of religion is to satisfy the inner hunger of man for the realisation of the Larger Self, the Divine. All the time this inner urge is there and seeks expression and fulfilment. The world evolves and man also evolves. His nature expands; he becomes less selfish, less insular, less parochial. This eternal struggle for expansion and freedom from bondage is the vital thing in life. At certain critical times in the history of the world we see definite forms in which this urge to expand expresses itself. Temples are good in

their own way and they are still necessary and useful for a very large number of people. But temples and ceremonies and all that go with them will be left behind if they are going to be obstacles in the way of expansion of the human heart and consciousness, instead of being a help. Time was perhaps when they were a necessary help and perhaps even today they are necessary to many; but nothing shall stand in the way of the human soul realising the Larger Soul in the Universe and feeling a unity running through all the differences we see around us, in the way of man realising every man and woman to be part of that Larger Self, in the way of feeling a mystic unity with all that lives; because it is this which matters more in religion than ceremonies or philosophies.

I do not deny there is a place in Hinduism for shrines, for ceremonies, for physical talismans and all the rest of it; but the emphasis should be on the wider and deeper view of things which naturally should take precedence over other minor considerations. I for one would use every help available in my religion for the benefit of the community, just as I may use an electric battery or a telescope. I should be foolish if I throw them aside because they do not show me my God at once. At the same time, I shall be thrice foolish if I blindly believed that these are my religion and I can realise God only through them.

The future religion seems to me to be a religion of God revealed in the Man. In times gone by, we have had God revealed as the Light, as the Sun, as Dharma, as Beauty, as Purity, as Magnificence, as Father, as Son, as Child; but we are now reaching a stage in evolution when God is being revealed to us as Man. If we wish to avoid being laid aside as back numbers, we have to sense this great ideal which is coming to be realised as an inevitable anchorage for humanity and help in the consummation of the Ideal. To realise God through Man is the new religion

which is being slowly but unmistakably revealed and he will be wise who hitches his waggon to that star and realises in advance what the generality of mankind will realise perhaps sometime hereafter.

36. Some Ancient Educational Ideals

In any country education to serve its true purpose must be related to the genius of the people, and any scheme for modelling the education of the future must be related to the past. Now, in India, there is a general awakening in educational matters. So, it is desirable that we have a clear idea as to the ideals which obtained in educational matters in the past, so that in attempting to model our present education on the lines of the past, we may adapt them to the modern conditions and at the same time ensure continuity in the nation's distinctive function in the world.

To be able to understand the educational methods and ideals, we must, in the first place, have clearly before our minds a correct conception of (1) man and his nature, and (2) the ideals of the nation. The ancient Aryans from time immemorial have held that man has four aspects—the physical, the emotional, the intellectual and the spiritual, and no education was considered perfect if it did not meet the requirements of these different aspects of man. Man is not merely the physical body, nor merely the senses, nor merely a bundle of emotions, nor is he an intellectual being only. He is all these and something more. He had his own inherent capacities and tendencies and the object of education was to draw out his inherent capacities, allow free scope for the display of his special capacities, and make it possible for him to make a distinctive contribution to the society to which he belongs. The noblest ideal that the Aryans ever had before them was to develop the individual

and make him give his best to the country, nay, to the whole world. The whole system of education was based upon these fundamental ideals.

The whole span of man's life was divided into certain great stages corresponding to the larger stages in the growth of human society,-and the nation's activities were also grouped under the corresponding heads. The original Varna Dharma and Asrama Dharma were based upon these ideals. Just as the human embryo reproduces on a small scale the stages through which life had evolved, so in the life of an individual all the experiences of the ancestors were lived again on a small scale. There was what we may call an appreciable parallelism between individual development and racial development.

In the early stages, usually up to the 7th year, no particular attempt was made to "impart" education to the child. Then began the period of studentship—Brahmacharya. The age at which this commenced depended upon the equipment and temperament of the pupil. In the case of the intellectually advanced student it usually began in the 8th year but in other cases it began at the 11th or 12th year. The period of studentship proper extended over 9 to 48 years according as the pupil wanted to master a part of the scriptures only or acquire all knowledge. It was after completing the student life that one was allowed to enter married life. The instruction received by the students included not only cultural and academic subjects but items of knowledge having a distinct bearing upon the life he had to lead as a Grihastha. Then came the later stage when he withdrew from the worldly activity and devoted himself to service on a larger scale along spiritual lines.

With regard to the subjects taught to the pupils, there was a good deal of variety. The student's individual predelictions played a great part in the subjects taught to him.

The four great divisions going by the name of castes were more rational in those days, and they were in fact mere classifications of humanity made on the principle of temperament and occupation. The verse in the Gita that says "the four castes have been created by me based upon temperament and occupation" is ample proof of the principle underlying the system. It is well known that the ideal has deteriorated and the system now exists only as a shell without any life. The person whose temperament marked him out for a teacher belonged to the Brahmana caste and his education was based upon the duties he had to take up later on in life as a Brahmana. Those in whom valour and prowess and capacity to organise showed forth as prominent characteristics naturally went to the ruling class and they had their own corresponding education. The commercial instinct marked out another type and so also the unskilled manual labourers. These were, and are natural divisions. Difficulty came in only when birth was made the sole criterion to judge a caste and not as the Lord put it, "temperament and occupation". It is not for me here to show that in ancient times the caste system was not at all rigid and caste was determined by temperament and occupation and not by birth alone, though in most cases, for a very long time in the early Aryan Society, birth went along with temperament and occupation.

After having classified humanity into these four groups, education was planned to suit all of them. That was why in the case of the Brahmana the studentship began much earlier than in the case of the Kshatriya, in whose case more time was given to the development of the physical side than to the other sides.

Education in those days was mostly residential. The student went to and lived with his teacher. Generally schools were situated not in the cities but in the midst of groves. The surroundings were beautiful, there was plenty

of space to move about and there was very little of any big structure in those times. As pupils, distinctions of rank were not recognised. King or peasant, boy or girl, had the same kind of treatment. We hear of princes being sent to their preceptors' houses. Sri Rama went with Viswamitra to learn the use of the weapons. Sri Krishna had his tutelage under Rishi Sandeepani. Even in later times when the University at Taxila was very famous and drew crowds of students into its portals, princes from far-off cities used to come there.

Teachers and pupils lived together all day and all night. The physical body of the pupils was kept active and healthy by the regular physical services they had to render to their teachers. They got up very early in the morning, had their prayers, went out and had their bath, and for this they had generally to walk a long distance. They washed their own clothes and those of the teachers also; then they went round and begged alms, and thus the life was so ordered that there was ample scope for the healthy development of the physical side of the pupils.

The teacher in ancient India was very much respected for his learning. He was usually one who was well versed in various branches of knowledge, and commanded the respect of all people. His personality was usually remarkable, and those who passed through his hands had the distinct mark of his personality stamped on them. The contact of the pupils with such a teacher evoked the highest emotions in them. The whole atmosphere was pure, serene and high. The spirit of service and comradeship was developed in the students to a remarkable degree and the living example of the teacher went a very long way towards the achievement of this object. As for intellectual development, the method adopted by the ancient teacher was in some respects different from that which obtains in modern times. They paid very great attention to memory,

in the first instance. Pupils were recommended to learn by rote a lot of things which they in their later life would be able to understand, and some of the ancient scholars were very famous for their almost superhuman memory. The story is told of Pandit Vasudeva Sarvabhauman who wanted to get mastery over *Nyaya*. At that time Mithila was the great centre for Nyaya and the Mithila University was the only possessor of a text-book on Nyaya and did not allow others to copy it. So the Pandit went and learned the whole text-book by heart and then started a first grade College for the study of that subject in his own University at Navadweepa. The memory of even the modern Pandits is remarkable. But at the same time the method adopted was such as to induce original thinking in the pupil rather than thrust new ideas into his brain. The teacher will sometimes give a short sentence (an aphorism) and the pupil will be asked to go and meditate upon it, and until he has done so to the teacher's satisfaction, he will not be allowed to proceed further. Many of you would have heard of the story of the pupil who was asked to find out the true nature of Brahman. After long meditation he came and said that Brahman was the food which went to build the physical body. The teacher shook his head and said "No". After another long period of meditation he came to the conclusion that Brahman was his senses. Again the teacher shook his head, and again he went and meditated until at last he realised that Brahman was above all these things. The pupil was trained to think for himself and learn for himself by meditation and realisation.

In the case of even incorrigible pupils, proper methods were adopted to bring out the latent faculties in them and teach them to read, write, count and so on. The sons of King Sudarsana of Pataliputra were incorrigibly ignorant and they would not learn things. They were put to training in the hands of Vishnu Sharma. He found that the only

thing which interested the princes was to rear pigeons. So he began their education from pigeons. He built a pigeon house for them and asked them to feed the pigeons and bring them up. As their number increased, they had to count them and mark them from one another. They were marked by the different letters of the alphabet. They were thus taught to learn the alphabet, then to combine the alphabets into words, and so on, until through this they were taught addition, subtraction, etc., and also something of house-building and engineering beginning with dove-cots. In the end they were fit to receive lessons in ethics and politics, which have come to us today in the shape of Hitopadesha and Panchatantra. This story goes to prove that while the teacher recognised that it was necessary to induce thinking faculties in the pupils, he suited the method and the subject matter to their temperament and propensities.

To the ancient Aryans everything was based upon religion. Religion was not then used in the narrow sense in which it is used now. All activity is God's and all knowledge is in essence Divine Knowledge and everything that they did or thought about or planned had for them a deeper meaning. Though a division was kept between the Paravidya and the Aparavidya, the higher and lower knowledge, one was related to the other and all knowledge was considered to be the means to the attainment of the higher knowledge. In fact, the history of some of the sciences shows that their developments can be traced to the religious necessities of the people. Geometry began when the Aryans started to construct their sacrificial altars, and extraction of the square root and other problems of Algebra were developed therefrom. The computation of elements in the triangle which again was related to the shape of the altar, led to the discovery of Trigonometry, and to determine auspicious moments and sacred occasions, based upon particular conjunctions of planets, they had to develop

Astronomy. The Vedas which are considered to be the most sacred of the Aryan scriptures depended for their accuracy and proper intonation on rhythm and that led to the sciences of Phonetics, Metre and Music. The ancient sages were well versed not only in the so-called scriptures but in other sciences as well. Rishi Agastya was the founder of the great seat of learning in Madura—"Tamil Sangam". He was famous for his proficiency in Medicine, Grammar and Astrology.

Elementary education as such in ancient times was more or less confined to the family. But later on schools were founded for practising figures, writing, calculation, and so on. *Lalita Vistara* mentions their existence at the time of Lord Buddha. Elementary schools were mostly held under trees in the open air and, if the weather was unfavourable, in temporary sheds. Later on this was left to the senior pupils to look after — a kind of monitorial system introduced in England by Andrew Bell. Secondary and still higher education was mostly imparted in forests under the guidance of Rishis who came there in their old age. But we hear of such institutions even in the courts of the enlightened kings—the Videhas, Kurus, Panchalas, and so on. There were Vedic Schools for teaching the Angas—Phonetics, Metre, Grammar, Etymology, Religious Practice and Astronomy, and there were also special schools in Science, and later on there also developed schools for the study of Law.

Discipline in the old system was anything but brutal. Manu distinctly says a teacher should impart instruction without doing any injury to the pupil and by using mild and sweet words. In extreme cases corporal punishment was resorted to, but that existed only on a very limited scale.

No education was considered complete without the finishing touches of the University life and so there came

to exist great Universities — the Universities of Taxila, Nalanda, Vikramasila, Navadweepa, and so on.

The Universities in ancient India were entirely residential. It was considered that a University should contain at least 21 Professors well versed in Philosophy, Theology and Law; pupils were given free tuition, free boarding, and students who went to an educational institution — be he a king or a peasant — lived and boarded together.

Then, a word on the great Universities of ancient India. Ashramas, Viharas and Parishads were great centres of culture and attracted large numbers. One is surprised to read of the very large numbers that crowded to a single University. The University of Vikramasila accommodated 8,000 people. They speak of Kulapatis in those times; the technical meaning of the word is 'one who feeds and teaches 10,000 students'. Kanva was one such. Kalidasa speaks of the various kinds of knowledge taught and learnt under the guidance of Kanva. There was no problem of accommodation in those times. The sages lived in forests and there was plenty of room to move about, there was no jostling of any kind, one never felt cramped. They speak of 500 as the number of students who can learn under a Professor, and we may take it to mean that the students went into groups of 500 for purposes of study of a special branch of knowledge presided over by a Professor. One is struck with amazement when one hears of the famous University of Takshasila (modern Taxila). Historians are never tired of showering eulogies on it. To go to Taxila was to complete education and without it no education was complete. The Jatakas are full of references to Taxila—over 100 in fact. We glean a good many details about it from them. Mention is made of world-renowned Professors who taught the three Vedas, the Kalas, Shilpa, Archery, and so on. King Kosala and Jivaka, the famous physicians, were students of the University, the latter learning medi-

cine under Professor Rishi Atreya. Great stress was laid on the study of Sanskrit and Pali literature as well. It is said that as many as 16 different branches of learning were taught; among them were painting, sculpture, image-making, and so on. The renowned grammarian Panini and the politician Chanakya, we hear, received their education at Taxila.

Nadiya (Navadweepa) was another great centre of Sanskrit learning in later times and people went there to learn the Vedas, the six Darsanas, the Mimamsas (Poorva and Uttara), Yoga and Tarka. It was the Muhammadan invasion of 1203 that destroyed this centre just as the Huns annihilated the great University at Taxila.

Nalanda was another great University, the site was chosen by Nagarjuna and the structure begun by Arya Deva, though it required four successive kings, Sakraditya, Buddha Gupta, Tathagata Gupta, and Baladitya, to finish the architecture and lay out the gardens. This centre is said to have accommodated 10,000 monks and provided for instruction in Logic, Geometry, Arithmetic, Astronomy, Philosophy, Metaphysics, History, Grammar, Pali, Sanskrit, Music and Tantric Medicine. Students flocked here from all parts of Europe and Asia. The University consisted of 6 colleges, its observatories and the nine-storeyed library *Ratnadadhi* were world-famous. Logic was a special field of study in Nalanda and the standard for this branch of study was very high. Unlike Taxila, technical sciences were excluded at Nalanda; that was because this University was intended primarily for the monks.

Vikramasila University, situated on a precipitous hill in Magadha on the banks of the Ganges rose also to great fame in the 8th century, and flourished for almost four centuries. It was destroyed along with Nalanda about 1200 A.D.

I do not propose to deal with later Universities, though several great centres sprang into existence after the Moghuls established themselves in this land and became patrons of learning.

India had a glorious past and had an excellent system of education—Elementary, Secondary and University. It is not at the present time possible to order everything on the lines which obtained in old times. But it is possible (and to my mind it seems to be necessary, if India is to make her distinct contribution to humanity), to organise our educational system on the basis of the ideals which our ancients so jealously guarded. It is no use trying to imitate the western systems; there may be no harm in assimilating them, especially their form side, into our fabric, but the essential basis must be rooted in our inherent genius and traditions. Let me conclude by mentioning what seem to me to be the points we might have in our mind in developing any educational system in India. "The veneration for learning, the taking it as a vocation, the simple life of the student, the loyalty to duty, the recognition of Dharma", these adapted to present-day conditions will alone make for a good, rational, national system of education.

37. The Message of the Bhagavad Gita to Modern Man

GITA NOT ONLY A PHILOSOPHY BUT A CODE OF CONDUCT

Gita consists of the teaching given to the pupil Arjuna by Lord Shri Krishna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra when the pupil, at the critical moment when the war was about to commence, was in doubt as to whether he was to follow the promptings of his personal affection and reverence for those on the opposite side or follow the dictates of duty. In unequivocal terms the Lord asks Arjuna

to fight the battle irrespective of his personal ties with persons on the other side. The occasion is utilised by the Lord to explain the whole purpose of Life, the meaning of all the world process and the place of man in the scheme of things. As the colophon at the end of every chapter puts it, the Gita is an Upanishad, it is a philosophical treatise. But it is something more than that; it is a code of conduct for man applicable to varying temperaments, various avocations and various levels of development. It is this aspect that makes for the unique place which the Gita has among the scriptures of the world. In the short space of this article it is not possible to deal with all the salient features of the Lord's teachings. I shall take just two or three points which may be of interest to us at the present time.

UNITY OF LIFE AND CONSEQUENT INTER-DEPENDENCE OF EVERYTHING IN THE WORLD

The Lord stresses throughout the central idea of all Indian philosophies, the Imminence of God and the inter-dependence of man—not only man, but of all beings. "The Lord dwelleth in the hearts of all beings." "Having pervaded this whole universe with one fragment of Myself, I remain." Everything in the universe partakes of one life; isolation is impossible; we are all knit together by that which is the common basis of all. The wise man realises that the outer differences are deceptive and illusory; he looks beyond the veil and sees the common basis of all beings. He "looks equally on a Brahmana (high caste person) adorned with learning and humility, a cow, an elephant, and even a dog and an outcaste." If only we live our lives on the basis of this unity would not this sordid earth become verily a heaven! How can there be wars, competition, distrust, jealousy and all that makes for the present condition of the world? When I hate a person I

hate myself, when I rob a person I rob myself. No one can really thrive at the expense of another. The conqueror and the conquered are both equally affected. Do we not see it now before our very eyes? It is only on the recognition of the Unity of Life and the Brotherhood of all beings that the safety of the world depends.

DEDICATED ACTION DOES NOT BIND; IT FREES THE MAN

The most important contribution of the Gita to the religious thought of India is the emphasis the Lord lays on action (*karma*, in Samskrit). The general belief is that all activity binds the man and so he must escape from all action to a condition of inaction, absolute passivity. This attitude of escapism is severely condemned by the Lord. He says, "Nor can anyone, even for an instant, remain really actionless". What binds a man is not the action but his attachment to the fruit of the action. And so the lord repeatedly enjoins activity without attachment to the fruit. "Thy business is with the action only, never with the fruits; so let not the fruit of action be thy motive, nor thou be to inaction attached." He wants all action to be done as an act of dedication. "Whatsoever thou doest, whatever thou eatest, whatever thou offerest..... do them as an offering unto Me." Let us by all means engage ourselves in action, but let it be as an offering to the Lord. If we do anything as unto the Lord, that does not bind us; but at the same time it becomes a holy act, an act of service for others. Such action will be distinctly better done as it will have to be fit to be offered to the Lord. Such action is verily yoga, the Lord says. By such dedicated action one can attain Perfection just as sages like the great Janaka attained Perfection through action *alone*. Action done as service, in His Name and for the good of mankind, can never bind; it will deliver us from bondage.

GITA'S MESSAGE OF HOPE

Above all Gita is a gospel of hope and optimism. Let no one despair. Weak as we are, full of faults as we are, we can all reach the goal. We are Divine in essence, our Divinity is only veiled; rend the veil and let the inner Divinity reveal itself. There is nothing which the Divinity in us cannot achieve. If we are only rightly resolved, our weaknesses, our "sins" will be washed out soon. "Never doth anyone who worketh for righteousness go to woe". "Even if the most sinful worship Me, with undivided heart, he too must be accounted righteous, for *he hath rightly resolved*". The Lord further guarantees, "Speedily he becometh dutiful and goeth to eternal peace." So, let no man think he cannot achieve the highest. He is essentially Divine and there is nothing which he cannot achieve by right resolve and dedicated activity.

38. The Theory of Avataras (Divine Manifestations)

The idea of manifestation, in the world of men, of Great Ones who have passed beyond our ken, of Divine Beings and Devas, for helping humanity at critical times in the history of the world, is common to all religions. They come when Their coming alone can save the situation. In the words of the Gita, They come to restore Righteousness when it has been trampled under foot by human selfishness and perversity. The question naturally arises, why should there arise in the Universe, created and sustained by an Omniscient and Omnipotent God, such a condition at all? The answer to this lies in two important factors. In the first place there is a Plan of God; it is in the Cosmic Divine Mind, which is beyond Space and Time

as we understand them. In that Mind the past, the present and the future exist together as an Eternal Now. It is true that ultimately that Plan will be fulfilled, but the Time factor is elastic. Evolution towards that Consummation may be quickened or retarded by man. Secondly, God has given man a very precious gift and that is free will. Theoretically man can set his will against God's Will. This free will is provided for in the Plan. It happens that at times man makes such a mess of things here that some special intervention is necessary to redeem the situation. Hence the need for Avataras.

Who incarnates as an Avatara? The work of carrying on the work of the Universe is in the hands of Vishnu, the Second Logos. In the Divine Government of the Universe there is a Department, if I may use the word, which is in charge of this duty. Some Great One from this department will come as an Avatara. Whosoever comes will be called Vishnu, because He comes from Vishnu's department as his Deputy. At times some minor officer of this branch may come; it all depends on the nature and magnitude of the work to be done. In Hindu religion they speak of the ten major Avataras and also of other minor Avataras.

How does the manifestation take place? Here we are on rather uncertain ground. There are various ways and grades of manifestation, from inspiration and over-shadowing to full possession of the body in which the manifestation takes place; Hinduism speaks of kalavatara, amsavatara, poornavatara, avesha and so on. On looking into the matter deeply and rationally, one may venture to say that almost all the Avataras have been only aveshas. If we study carefully the Avataras we shall see that, in the life-period of the Avatara, the special work for which the manifestation came, does not take the whole period; it is only on certain specific occasions that the need for the manifestation arises. It will be too much to expect a Great

One (Vishnu) to leave His Cosmic work aside and live in a mortal body for a life-time when really the need for His work comes only on a few occasions. It will be reasonable to presume that the body will be looked after and kept going by some one—an advanced soul himself—and surrendered to the Lord for being used by Him for the special purpose. If we study the lives of the Avataras, specially Rama and Krishna, we shall find plenty of hints to support this position as the most logical one. It is obvious that such a surrender of the body cannot be made by all and sundry. He who can do this must be a great yogi himself who knows his mission of preparing a body fit to be used by the incarnating Great One. Other great Rishis also help in this preparation, for example, Vishwamitra for Rama and Sandeepani for Krishna. In the case of Rama the first attempt at occupation of the body by Lord Vishnu takes place when Parasurama hands over the divine bow of Lord Vishnu to Rama, when the latter is returning to Ayodhya after his marriage with Sita; a reference to Valmiki will show this. There are also other references in Ramayana, Bhagavata and Mahabharata which will suggest the idea that almost all Avataras are of the nature of Aveshas only.

39. The Gift of Free Will

The human Monad is essentially divine. He has all the divine attributes, though down here, in manifestation, they are latent. The whole object of manifestation is to enable the human Monad to reveal, to release, to give adequate expression to his divine faculties. There are two pulls in this universe: there is the Infinite trying to become finite, which in Hindu literature is very often called Ishwara Lila, divine play. And then there is the finite naturally trying to become Infinite. In the finite the qualities of the Infinite are naturally latent, and the object of all evolution is to

make these latent faculties, divine attributes, patent and active.

One of the most prominent attributes of Divinity is FREE WILL. The Divine is said to have the power to do (kartum), to undo (akartum), to modify (anyat-kartum). In other words, He is omnipotent, He can do anything. Now the human Monad, because he is essentially divine, has this free will in him. In the earlier stages, we do not find much evidence of that free will. But, as time goes on, he develops his free will. It is in the exercise of this free will that the whole object and the whole meaning of evolution lie. If there were no free will what could be the meaning of human evolution? Where is the sense of responsibility? If we have no free choice, we are not responsible, we become puppets. Surely the object of all this evolution is not to deal with mere puppets! We are divine and we are going to be perfectly divine, completely divine, absolutely divine, one of these days. That is why we are here.

But in manifestation we work under certain natural laws, the laws of Nature. In the initial stages when we observe these laws, which are inviolable, irrevocable, immutable, impersonal, the same for X, Y, and Z, we feel so helpless. Everything works out according to law. We cannot do anything. We cannot interfere with anything. But presently we learn that, because of these very immutable irrevocable laws, we are safe, secure and free from anxiety. If, for example, a stone thrown in the air were to fall to the ground today and fly to the heavens tomorrow, if today fire burns and tomorrow it chills, then there would be absolute confusion. In fact our safety, our sense of security, our sense of certainty are possible because the laws of God or Nature are immutable, irrevocable, inviolable.

One of these laws is called the Law of Causation or the Law of Karma, or the Law of Action and Reaction.

This law shows us that a particular cause always gives a particular result. The causal relation between these two is absolute. When once a set of causes has been set moving, a set of results is inevitable. And if I am responsible for setting in motion any given set of causes, then I am bound to it, I am linked to it, and I am bound to reap the effect, the result of that set of causes. That is, in simple language, the basis of the Law of Karma. Whoever sets a number of causes moving, he naturally must face the result. But very often, as we know, this Law of Karma leads one to a sort of fatalistic attitude. Especially here in India, very often people say: "What to do, Sir, that is my karma; that is my fate." They mix up fate and karma and destiny. Surely, it is your karma, and you have to face it, you cannot escape it. It is you who produced the causes, and therefore you have now to face the result.

In the earlier stages, we go on doing things, we set in motion a large number of causes, and they become a huge load for which we are responsible. To use our usual terminology, many karmic debts have accumulated which we have to discharge. Now what we generally call fate is only this accumulated mass of causes which we have personally set going. Naturally we must work out the result.

But is there no way of escape? Yes, there is. Just as we made, we can unmake. Very often we think that we cannot do anything with a certain piece of karma. But what we have done we can undo also. That is the optimistic side of the Law of Karma. I go further. Personally, I feel that even the so-called "Prarabdha karma" is not inviolable. We are told that from the vast storehouse of one's past karma, the great Lords who plan these things choose certain items for being worked out in a particular incarnation. We call it Prarabdha karma. The meaning is that it is karma which has already started working out, giving results. Now the general belief is that it cannot be changed

and that even great Rishis and Munis and Avataras cannot undo Prarabdha karma. You can do what you like only with what is left over. But I believe and say that even with regard to this there is no finality. In Tamil, they use the word *vidutthasharam*, a very expressive word, for Prarabdha karma. Suppose you have a bow and an arrow. Now, as long as you have not sent out the arrow, it is left to you to choose its direction and velocity, but once the arrow has left the bow it is *Vidutthasharam*, it is an arrow which has left the bow. That is the meaning of it. It is done, it is finished, it goes; you cannot do anything with that—Prarabdha karma is like that. But if we have sufficient knowledge of practical dynamics, we will take another arrow and send it after the first arrow with such veloicty and in such a direction that it will impinge upon the earlier arrow and make it go in any direction we like. It is open to us to do so, and I believe there are cases where even Prarabdha karma has been manipulated by a strong will. But, for this, we require knowledge as to how to handle a subsequent arrow, so that the effect of the first arrow may be changed. That is why, in the Gita, the Lord says that the man who knows, the jnani, burns all these things to ashes—a phrase which people ordinarily interpret to mean that he can wipe away all his karma. He can burn them into ashes, not wipe them away. He converts them to ashes in jnanagni, in the fire of his knowledge. We can all do that; theoretically it is possible for any person to take himself in hand, burn out all his liabilities, and all that binds him, and go as a free man to his ultimate goal.

Verily man is the creator of his destiny, or to use the words of one of the Three Great Truths given to us:

"Each man is his own absolute lawgiver, the dispenser of glory or gloom to himself; the decreer of his life, his reward, his punishment."

40. Our Problems and Their Solution

Our world is now passing through a very critical period; this crisis is felt in every department of human activity. Everywhere we find unrest, gloom, a mental tension as if in the face of an impending catastrophe. It looks as though the civilisation of which we were so proud is crumbling before our very eyes. People everywhere talk of peace, yet what they actually do is far from being conducive to peace; they seem to be helpless.

What is this state of affairs due to? It is really due to a fundamental change in the values in life brought about by the advancement of science. In the seventeenth century the present scientific attitude had its origin; Newton's laws of Mechanics tried to explain the universe purely in mechanical terms. Science thereafter developed along this mechanical line. The previous view, based as it was on God, a Plan and Purpose in the universe, and a moral order obtaining in the world, receded to the background. In fact, in the new view there was no need of a God or purpose or any moral order. Any question of right or wrong, good or evil was irrelevant. Every process of nature was only a sequence of cause and effect. This view gained ground. Premium was set on reason and intellect as the highest faculty of man; there was nothing beyond this.

Man himself was only an item in this causal sequence. Everything was predeterminable and there was no such thing as free will of man; he was only a cog in the great mechanism. From this it naturally follows that there can be no moral responsibility. Man was only acquiring knowledge and adding to his store of knowledge by new discoveries. This stress on the lower mind and intellect, ignoring as it did other higher and deeper aspects of human nature, has been mainly responsible for the existing state of things. Man added to his knowledge but lacked the

wisdom to use his knowledge properly. Knowledge is not Wisdom. As a poet would have it:

"Knowledge and wisdom, far from being one,
Have oft times no connection. Knowledge dwells
In heads replete with thoughts of other men;
Wisdom in minds attentive to their own.
Knowledge is proud that he has learned so much,
Wisdom is humble that he knows no more."

It has, however, to be remembered that science had no idea of bringing about any such radical changes in the old views of God and religion; it was not out deliberately to create these conditions; it concerned itself only with its progress along its restricted path. Nor were all the scientists bent on creating this irreligion so to say. Some of them, Newton included, were religious-minded, and some were idealists. But their work and the theories they propounded produced this violent change in the world-picture, as an inevitable consequence. In the life of the ordinary man of intelligence religion and all it stood for ceased to play any part. The "Modern Man", the legacy of this viewpoint, has been thus described by a poet:

"Love exists not and Intellect bites him like a snake,
For he has failed to subordinate Intellect to Intutition;
He has traced the stars in their courses
But has failed to pick his way in the domain of his
own thoughts;

He has got so entangled in the mazes of his knowledge
That he is yet unable to distinguish profit from loss!
He has ensnared the rays of the sun,
But failed to illuminate the dark night of his life!"

But the achievements of science are remarkable; it has widened the vista of man's knowledge and increased his powers over the forces of Nature; it has added much to

the comfort of man; above all it has brought all humanity nearer by more efficient and quicker modes of inter-communication. As they say, the world has shrunk; we are aware of all that is happening in any part of the world—nay, in other worlds as well. While thus we have been brought together into closer contact physically, our minds are not working in amity, we are at loggerheads; and this is indeed the greatest tragedy of life! In the words of a poet:

> "Here lies the tragedy of our race;
> Not that men are poor;
> All men know something of poverty,
> Not that men are wicked;
> Who can claim to be good?
> Not that men are ignorant;
> Who dare boast that he is wise?
> But *that men are strangers*!"

What has Theosophy to say to this condition of things? It has an explanation and a solution. The age of the lower mind with its analytical function is to end. Further progress along that line is not possible. Science is knocking at a blind wall, further advance along the purely materialistic line is impossible. If we have to tide over the present crisis and preserve all the knowledge we have gathered for the benefit of future humanity, our outlook must change; we have to recognise man as a spiritual being with various aspects in him that need to be evolved, that the intellect which made him so conceited is only one of these aspects, that we are on the threshold of a new era in which Love and Synthesis will be the guiding factors, that Knowledge has to yield place to Wisdom which is really a Synthesis of Love and Knowledge, and that all human relationships should be based on the Law of Brotherhood and Unity of Life. All life in this Universe is a Unity and we are all

linked together in one great brotherhood. This is a fact in nature. Unless the future civilisation is based on a recog- tion of this great Law there is no future for us and our civilisation will crumble to pieces. And already great thinkers in various fields of human activity have begun to glimpse this new ideal; scientists like Einstein, Edding- ton, Jeans feel the utter futility of the so-called scientific view. They feel that the so-called material world is a Great Thought, and the Thinker is a pure mathematician. The old concepts regarding matter, life and mind are being given up; it is found that matter can be converted into energy and vice versa.

As against the old idea of a purposeless world they begin to see a purpose and a plan. Here is what Dr. Ken- neth Walker, Professor, Royal College of Surgeons, says in his book Human Physiology:

"Science is laying more and more emphasis on the oneness of life and on the interdependence of all living creatures. Life on the surface of the planet may be looked upon as a whole and not as an accidental collection of isolated individuals......Life is essentially the same, whether it be the life of a flower or the life of a dictator......Theolo- gical forms of thought are eschewed by all scientists, but it is impossible to study science without being filled with a sense of plan. Life on this planet cannot be an accident, the result of the interplay of blind forces. Somewhere there exists a plan, even though the limitations of the human mind make it impossible to grasp it. Life on the earth serves some great purpose and consciousness fits into some scheme."

There is to be a new revelation, not necessarily from outside, but from ourselves; the intuitional aspect, the love aspect in us must reveal itself more and more; the estrange- ment between the head and the heart has brought about

the present muddle; their working in harmony on the basis of Unity and Brotherhood will usher in the new civilisation; and with the dawn of that civilisation the present-day problems would have been automatically solved.

41. The Problem of Suffering

Considering the problem of suffering from the commonsense point of view, there is nothing abstruse about it and it does not involve any high metaphysics. The problem is universal and very wide; in fact, there are some who equate suffering and sorrow with life. The poets have called this Earth the "Sorrowful Star." The Path towards Perfection is itself described at times as the "Path of Woe". The problem looms large in our thoughts and we are constantly battling with its variegated phases.

Suffering in the abstract may be said to have started with manifestation, as manifestation means and involves limitation and bondage, a thing which clogs, blocks and restrains and hence causes suffering. The ultimate liberation from suffering has been the aim of the teachings of many a World Teacher. The Lord Buddha, for example, attempted to solve this eternal riddle of sorrow, its cause, its ending and the path towards that ending. The philosophy and ethics of Buddhism constitute a rational attempt to find a solution to this great problem of sorrows, and the Noble Eightfold Path deals with it in a practical manner.

The idea of suffering is common. We know almost intuitively what it is for almost everyone has tasted it in one way or other, perhaps in varying degrees of intensity. But is there "Suffering"? Is this real or merely illusory? I suffer. But without the "I" that feels the suffering there is no suffering. So it is that philosophers sometimes call this illusory, having no absolute existence. What appears as suffering or discomfort to one person may bring comfort

and joy to another. Why, even the same thing may bring comfort or discomfort to one and the same person according to circumstances; for example, warm clothing which is uncomfortable in summer, may bring great comfort in winter. It all depends on how an individual reacts to a given set of circumstances. From this point of view the duality of joy and suffering, of happiness and misery, of comfort and discomfort ceases to have any objective validity.

We live under certain irrevocable, inviolable, absolute laws of nature in manifestation. We have also our free will; without this free will there can be no question of responsibility, no morality or Ethics, no idea of good and bad, of right and wrong and so on. This free will is apt to react in varying ways to the different laws of nature. When it reacts in consonance with the laws, the experience is joy. When it reacts against these laws, there is suffering. Suffering is due, really, to our not living in harmony with the laws of nature. In the inviolability of these laws lies our safety. We can utilize or manipulate these laws so as to produce any pre-meditated effect, because we are certain of the working of the laws. Are we not using the law of gravity to enable us to fly? We get more knowledge and therefore more power as we study and understand these laws, and our free will may be used to derive maximum joy and satisfaction by working in hamony with these laws. It is all a question of being in tune or out of tune with the laws of nature. And the most fundamental Law, the Basic Law of the Universe, of which the other laws are only partial phases, is the Law of Unity. Any one who lives in tune with this Law is assured of pure joy.

42. Conquest of Desire

Generally speaking, there are two ways of dealing with human desires. We often come across certain types of

ascetics who consider human senses and desires as enemies to all spiritual progress and hence treat them as such. They ill-treat their bodies, at times even torture them. So also they stifle and repress all desires as demons and Satan's emissaries. While this kind of treatment may be useful as a kind of discipline and as a way of strengthening one's will, it will not be helpful in the long run. Human body is as much divine as anything else is. It is also God-made, and it serves some purpose in His plan. So also our desires serve a purpose, they help the elemental essences to evolve. We ought to take a detached attitude and observe the inter-play of nature's forces. As the *Gita* puts it, the wise man sees only the attributes of nature interacting among themselves and remains unaffected. Everything here serves in some way the Plan. We must utilise everything for helping progress and evolution. A negative or militant attitude will not help. If one merely represses a desire without understanding its nature he may avoid yielding to it, but the attraction is always there—*rasa*. But if he sees its true nature and realises its place and purpose in the Plan, he will *drishtwa*), with the result that the lower desires wither away not fight it, he will replace it by something higher (*Param* by the side of those higher emotions. Do not fight evil; circumvent it, replace it by the opposite good and the evil automatically will cease to be.

There are some methods we might adopt to help us to achieve this. Devotion is a potent factor—I mean by devotion not any kind of sentimental exhilaration but real devotion which leads to the devotee surrendering himself or herself unreservedly, whole-heartedly to the Object of Devotion—Bhakti of the kind which filled the mind and soul of bhaktas like Meera Bai and Andal. They existed but for Him, the Object of their devotion. To them nothing else mattered but to please and serve their Lord and

Master. If such a devotion can be attained then all problem ceases; the devotees' individualities get merged, as it were, in the great Self of their Beloved. They reach an indivisible union with that Object. In the presence or contemplation of that Object of Devotion all their lower desires vanish, all their personal thoughts cease to be; there is only one desire and that is the desire to be like the Object of their adoration, to be one with Him.

Another practical way of achieving this mastery over desires is to forget oneself in one's work so that there is no occasion for any desire to intrude on his consciousness. They say: "Idle man's brain is devil's workshop"; it is true. Choose some mode of service which grips you and interests you, throw yourself heart and soul into it, always be thinking of how best to do that work. The lower promptings will get atrophied and wither away. This is a very effective way of dealing with the problem of controlling our desires.

43. Some Problems in Karma

The law of karma is one of the fundamental laws in Nature. It is also called the Law of Action and Reaction. "As a man soweth, so shall he reap." It is a universal law, unchanging, impersonal, immutable and inviolable. As a man evolves through successive lives he makes 'Karma' and in due course will experience the reaction—in other words repay all his karmic debt. A man's karma is generally considered under three heads. First, the Sanchita Karma (the accumulated store of karmic debts), then the Prarabdha karma (that part which is chosen for repayment in a given incarnation) and thirdly Agamya karma (the karma he is making a-new of his own volition). Out of the total stock of one's individual karma, the Lords of Karma choose certain items to be worked out or ad-

justed in a particular life of the individual, the choice being made with a view to bring about the progress of the individual and the universe as quickly as possible. Obviously, this is a stupendous task and human mind will reel even from an attempt to envisage the magnitude of the task of dealing with the karmic relations of 60,000 million monads who are said to be in evolution. Anyway the Great Lords of Karma manage it. That particular part chosen by them for being worked out in a particular life of an individual is called *prarabdha* karma; and it is usually believed that this is unchangeable. It is generally compared to an arrow which has left the bow. Before the arrow leaves, its direction could be controlled; once it has left, it is beyond our control and we cannot do anything with it. It is this *prarabdha* karma which is indicated in the individual's horoscope. The span of one's physical life in that incarnation is one of the items included in *prarabdha* karma and this is fixed. A good astrologer will be able to predict the time of one's death—of course, within reasonable limits—from a properly-cast horoscope.

There are some other factors which are included in *prarabdha* karma which are indicated in the horoscope as well. But all this relates only to normal cases. People generally take it that the laws of karma as we understand them are *absolutely* rigid and inviolable. But Nature is more elastic than we presume or infer with our limited intellect. There are realms of life and consciousness beyond the province of the human mind and the real bases of the so-called Laws of Nature are rooted in those realms. It is safe not to be dogmatic about any "Law of Nature". Ordinarily, the *prarabdha* karma of an individual (in which is included the span of his physical life) for a particular incarnation is fixed; and in most cases this can be read in general outline from the horoscope. That is the scope of astrology.

Coming to the major question whether *prarabdha* karma is absolutely irrevocable, the answer will have to be "no". It is one thing to say that a law is absolutely inviolable, but it is entirely a different matter to say that it is ordinarily unchangeable. In dealing with this major question we are actually coming to the realm of "out of the ordinary" happenings. Though the time of death of the physical body is fixed, death may take place at other times under extraordinary conditions. I am not considering here the case of suicide which is an exceptional happening not provided for in the plan of a man's life.* There are cases where death may take place at a time other than that fixed in the *prarabdha* karma. We hear of mass catastrophes like ship-wreck, train accidents, plane crashes, huge fire, monsoon floods and so on, in which several persons lose their lives almost simultaneously. What happens generally in such cases is that persons whose karma needs to be worked out by their being drowned, as in a ship-wreck, are somehow brought together by their karma to travel in that particular ship, so that through that one accident several people's karma may be adjusted. Otherwise, a ship-wreck or something similar to it will have to be managed for each such individual. The Lords of Karma, as other Divine Agencies, have a keen eye for economy. So group accidents are arranged; or an accident is utilised as an opportunity to work out the karmic debts of several individuals at one stroke as it were. But there may happen to be passengers whose *prarabdha* karma does not provide for their being drowned at the time. Generally people who have planned to go in that ship but whose *prarabdha* karma does not include drowning in a ship-wreck, would have somehow been prevented from getting into the ship.

* For detailed information on this subject of suicide I would suggest a reference to Chapter VI of the book *Talks with a Class* by Dr. Annie Besant.

Such cases are not rare. On the way to the ship an accident may occur and the person kept back. I know definitely of several cases when at the last moment something happens and the person is prevented from being involved in such a mass disaster. If, however, some person chances to be on the ship whose *prarabdha* does not provide for dying in shipwreck, the Lords of Karma or Their agents in charge will find out if there is any piece of karma in the person's stock-karma (called the *sanchlta-karma*) which can be worked out by such a drowning, and if there is any such karma they will just let the person get drowned and carry over the unexhausted part of his *prarabdha* karma to the stock-karma from which to choose future *prarabdha* karma. But if there is no such piece of karma available in the person's stock-karma that person will *somehow* be saved, though the escape may seem to be miraculous. Such miraculous escapes are on record in abundance.

In this connection let me quote what Dr. Besant says on this matter.

"The fact is that the period of life under physical conditions *is* fixed; the period of striking off the physical body is *not* fixed. At one point or another death may come. There will be times when, because of the karma, death cannot be averted, but there may be other periods when an added force may turn it away like any other kind of karma. There are points that are certain, and there are those that may be varied by exertion.

"......But the whole life under physical conditions is a fixed period and if he passes out of earthly life before that period is fulfilled on the physical plane, he has to live on for the remainder of it under what you may call partly earth-life conditions in the astral world. His physical body has been struck away before the life period is over. But the normal period after death only begins when that earthly life-period is exhausted; that is the point you have to remember."

We have to note that man is always making karma; his stock-karma is being modified—added to or diminished—every moment. That past karma is pressing on him all the time and he is making new karma incessantly; these two greatly influence the way in which *prarabdha* karma is being worked out. I referred to *prarabdha* karma as being generally likened to an arrow which has been discharged from the bow and which cannot, therefore, be influenced in any manner thereafter. But is it really so unchangeable? It is true that the arrow once discharged mechanically goes its own course determined by dynamical considerations. The man however, if he is determined, can change the course of the arrow by sending another arrow with a suitable velocity and in a suitable direction so that it may hit the first arrow and change its course. If he is a man of knowledge he can so manipulate the second arrow that the course of the first arrow is changed in any manner he desires. As long as the free will of man is operative we have to provide for unexpected possibilities. While dealing with an ordinary conventional person the prevalent idea regarding horoscopes and the fixed nature of the hour of death and so on may be taken as applicable.

In passing I may refer to a point which has a relevant bearing on the question under consideration. Books on astrology are not so dogmatic as some of the interpreters of the science of astrology would lead us to believe. The science provides for the inferences proving incorrect in the case of Yogis and Bhaktas. So it is obvious that the rules and findings of astrology are taken to be applicable only to ordinary men and women who live normal conventional lives.

This brings us to a point of vital importance, especially to aspirants for spiritual life. What we call karma (individual or national or racial, etc.) is only a part of the "activities" in which every living being is engaged. Every centre

of life is active all the time. As Lord Sri Krishna says in Canto II of the Gita, "Nothing can remain inactive even for an instant." But all this is not karma which is under the operation of the "Law of Karma". When we speak of karma we generally refer only to that action—using this word in its most general sense of any impulse—in which an individual or a group of individuals is involved, for which there is a reaction. If anyone is not personally involved (that is, has no attachment, *sanga*) in an act, then the reaction of that act does not affect him. The forces generated by that act are there undoubtedly, but they go into a general reservoir which takes in such forces and is in charge of the Nirmanakayas who use that storehouse of energy for purposes of Their own. The great Adepts are engaged in "action" all the time but as They are not personally entangled in any such action there is no karmic reaction on them. When one engages oneself in action without any attachment to it or without getting personally entangled in it there cannot be any *personal* reaction.

Similarly, automatic action of the organs of a human body does not necessarily involve any karmic reaction on the individual. The only action which comes under the operation of the Law of Karma is that which is deliberately done by an individual, to which he is personally attached and through which he hopes to achieve some result. So, generally and theoretically speaking, the action of a person—this applies to group or mass consciousness also *mutadis mutandis*—may fall under three heads: (i) the automatic and instinctive action of his vehicles under the impulses set going by the first and second outpourings from the Third and Second Logoi, (ii) the action motivated by the person's individual will or desire or thought with a view to achieve a personal purpose, and (iii) action performed as sacrifice, as a matter of duty or as an offering to the Lord or the Master, action done out of Love for

others, done because he cannot help doing good to mankind, as the Great Ones are doing all the time. Of these three, the first and the last go into what we may call general storehouse and only the second category comes under the operation of the Law of Karma. The first category is common to all and so may be left out of our present consideration. In the case of the ordinary man of the world with very little spiritual leaning, the second category dominates and there is very little of the third category. As a man evolves, more and more of what he does comes into the third category, until he reaches a stage when he becomes free from any attachment to or entanglement in whatever he does. Thereafter there is nothing to bind him to any act; he becomes free, becomes a *Mukta*. a liberated one. Not that he does not act; on the contrary he is ever so much more active than before. But he is no more under the bondage of the law of personal karma, not bound to the wheel of births and deaths. The individual karma-ledger, so to say, exists only so long as he acts in his individual capacity. When he has ceased to be "I" and identifies himself with the One Life there is no personal ledger anymore for him. He becomes "karmaless".

Now there are one or two interesting problems which come up in this connection. We are told that the Law of Karma being a Divine Law is inviolable and absolute. Of course this is true. When it comes to a matter of applying this Divine Law to human life there are various factors that come into operation which are all provided for in the Divine Law but some of which are likely to be forgotten by us when we deal with the application of the Law to individual cases. *A* borrows from *B* two hunderd rupees which are paid by *B* in two currency notes of hundred rupees denomination. *A* has to repay *B* sooner or later. If the law of compensation is applied mechanically and literally *A* has to pay back the loan in the same shape i.e., in two hundred rupee notes. (Of course here I am not

taking into consideration any interest). This interpretation is obviously far-fetched and absurd. The loan may be repaid in various ways: *A* may pay the same in full quickly—this is at times called "ready-money karma"—or pay it in small instalments within a certain period or may pay it later. In any case *A* will have to pay back the loan, if not in this life, in some future life. The manner in which the karmic debt is discharged is not rigidly prescribed. There is a good deal of elasticity about the matter. Again, the question may come up whether *A* himself should repay the loan to *B*. Suppose *A* does some good turn to *C* and *C* in turn undertakes to repay *A*'s debt to *B* himself. Will not such an arrangement meet the needs of the law of compensation?

This incidentally raises the question of vicarious karma. This is too important a topic to be dealt with incidentally here. In any case we may take it that the actual working out of the law of karma in individual cases allows of great latitude and no one can be dogmatic about it. C.W.L. gives two instances to illustrate this point. "The school-boy who mischievously pinches a classmate will certainly not have to meet that classmate a thousand years hence under other skies in order to be pinched by him in return......" Then again. "A man who murders another may conceivably sometimes himself be murdered in turn in another incarnation; but he can cancel the karma much more satisfactorily if he happens to have an opportunity in the next incarnation of saving the life of his former victim at the cost of his own. It would seem that sometimes he may cancel it without losing his own at all;........" I have quoted these two extreme cases to show the great elasticity of the Law in its actual working.

Another question may arise in this connection, however academic or abstract or hypothetical it may seem. The question may be stated thus: A person has a karmic

debt still to discharge. Is it absolutely necessary that he should discharge it in full before he reaches the Goal? I have designedly used the word "absolutely", because generally (in 99.999 per cent of cases) the law requires it. But the real point is whether there can be exceptions. Is it possible for the karmic debt of an individual to be taken over or shared by others? Is it possible at all for a karmic debt to be excused or condoned or cancelled? Here we are dealing with exceptional cases; people will be foolish if they forget that very important point. In the case of a disciple who has been drawn very close to his Master, it might happen that, in the interests of higher and more universal work, the Master takes over the disciple's karma and releases him for some higher work which he would have found impossible to do with that karmic debt hanging round his neck like a millstone. In this case the Master will suitably deal with that piece of karma in consultation with the Lords of Karma and the Nirmanakayas. So also in the case of a true devotee who has genuinely surrendered himself to the Lord unreservedly and thereby absolved himself of all individual liability, the Lord Himself takes up the responsibility of liquidating the devotee's debts. In the famous verse 22 of the IX Canto of the *Gita*, the Lord guarantees that in such extremely exceptional cases he will himself see to the devotee's karmic adjustments. But such cases are extremely rare; they may, for practical purposes, be taken as almost hypothetical.

As regards the possibility of sharing one's karma with others, the idea need not be so startling; because in the group-soul every member shares his karma with every other. We came from the group-soul condition to our present individualized condition; and finally when we realise the Unity of Life we shall be sharing what we have and what we are, with everyone else. But even before that stage

is reached there seems to be the possibility of an individual sharing his karma with others. (We might have heard of the "twin-soul" theory; but I do not propose to deal with it here). Mr. C. Jinarajadasa in his book *The Seven Veils Over Consciousness* referring to a letter from the Master Serapis (letter No. 19 in *Letters From the Masters of the Wisdom*, Second Series) in which the Master speaks of the union of two souls, says, "......their karmas interblend. It is as if the two karmas were two tanks joined by a pipe. If the level in one rises, the level in the other rises also, till both are at the same level". The implication is obvious. If this is true of two souls, then theoretically it is possible for more than two karmas to be inter-connected so that all the karma-tanks keep the same level. Here again we have ever to keep in mind that we are dealing with very rare and exceptional cases. Barring such cases we may take it that the usual ideas about the application of the Law of Karma hold good.

44. The Lord Buddha

Today, 2,500 years after the Maha-Parinirvana of the Lord Buddha, the world is ringing with thoughts of the life and teachings of the Enlightened One. The Buddha-Jayanti celebrations have focussed the attention of humanity on the significance of the great sermons of the Blessed One who has been acclaimed as the first flower in our tree of humanity. In the process of evolution of the universe from the mineral to the plant and animal stage and on to the human, there were two souls who were always ahead of all the others. In one Love was dominant, while in the other it was Wisdom. In the Occult Hierarchy a selection had to be made to fill the post of the Buddha who was in charge of the religious instruction of the world, an office till then held by Kashyapa, a Great One from

Venus. The candidate chosen was He known to us as Gautama Siddhartha, One in whom the Wisdom-Love was personified. As Bodhisatwa, he took the vow before Kashyapa to work his way up and to equip himself for the great office of the Buddha. He came to the world several times: as Vyasa in India, as Hermes in Egypt, as Zarathushtra in Persia and as Orpheus in Greece. When the time came for his elevation to the high office of Buddha he chose to be born in Kapilavastu with Suddhodana and Maya as the parents.

One great significant feature about the Lord Buddha is the amount of authentic, reliable, historical data available about his life and activities apart from mere traditions. The main incidents of his life are quite well known unlike in the case, say, of Shankara.

Now, what is the significance of the Lord Buddha to the world in general and to us in India in particular? It looks as though the Lord Buddha never intended to found a new religion. When he was born, the general tendency was to regard the world as a vale of sorrow and there was a feeling of escapism, an anxiety for liberation, and this was sought to be achieved through contemplation, severe austerities and infliction of pain on the physical body by fasting and so on. Prince Siddhartha also followed the same line till he swooned under the Bodhi tree. When, however, he awoke from this faint he was the Buddha, the Enlightened One, a personality quite different from the one that had swooned. The difference between the two is very marked. From then on the Lord Buddha struck a new path. cutting away from the old moorings and blazing a new trail, presenting a new view of eternal truths and a new way of approach to life's problems.

The Teachings of the Lord Buddha were the natural outcome of the paths followed earlier. The central theme

of his teaching was "Follow the Middle Path". He reiterated the teachings of the Gita in regard to Yoga and pointed out that extremes were not suited to our needs. There had been a shifting from one point to another in the ultimate goal of Hinduism. A section regarded Moksha as the ultimate ideal, while another regarded Immortality, Deathlessness or Amritattva as the goal. The former laid emphasis on getting away from the body. This was regarded as a negative approach and the importance of discipline. control of body, ascetic life etc., was overstressed. In the second alternative the emphasis shifted to Immortality. There was a deep cleavage between these two ways of thought when the Lord Buddha came. As one having experienced luxury and austerity, pleasure and pain, the Lord Buddha felt that the proper solution was a commonsense approach through the middle course, a balanced life through the Noble Eightfold Path.

There is a view that in all his teachings the Lord Buddha did not mention God. This was because He was born a Hindu and took God for granted. He never felt it necessary to mention God particularly. He did not bother about metaphysical disquisitions. He never presumed he was founding a religion. His was a reformed, reasonable, and tolerant presentation of Hinduism with stress on the ethical side. The Eightfold Path and the Panch Shila were guides to the life here, based on a presumption of all the metaphysics of Hinduism. His teachings can best be understood and appreciated only when taken along with the fundamental tenets of Hinduism with which they were closely integrated. His message, constituting a code of conduct in everyday life, went directly to the hearts of men.

Some have held that the Lord Buddha was concerned with only the negative aspect of life which he considered as full of sorrow. His Four Noble Truths, it was held, represent only a partial view. But this is closing our eyes to

the fact that joy can be squeezed out of sorrow too. Sorrow and bitter experience give us a firmer grip of life and develop newer and greater faculties in us. The Lord Buddha only re-emphasized the lessons of the ancient scripture that if one was impersonal and did not get entangled in any situation, joy could be got out of sorrow. He was concerned with relating even sorrow to daily life and so gave His Five Principles, laying emphasis on the ethical side.

The teachings of the Blessed One are as vital today as they were twenty-five centuries ago and provide a wonderful code of conduct for a humanity in travail. His purity and tenderness, in the words of Sir Edwin Arnold, united the truest princely qualities with the intellect of a sage and the passionate devotion of a martyr. As Lama Anagarika Govinda has said, His message of love and compassion has opened the hearts of men, His wisdom of the Middle Path has freed their minds. The practice of meditation has helped to unite their faculties of heart and mind and has created that self-discipline and insight into the innermost nature of man, and this has made Buddhism a world religion and one of the profoundest influences in the cultural life of humanity.

45. The Yoga of Business

The title may startle the readers. The juxtaposition of the two words may seem queer. Generally in India, we associate Yoga with Sannyasis, with saffron robes, with retreating to forest, with doing miracles and so on. It would appear as if yoga can have nothing to do with business, which is entirely mundane, because yoga indicates other-worldliness and business indicates getting immersed in essentially practical, material things. But such a view is based upon an erroneous conception of what yoga stands for.

Yoga literally means union, and practically it means that which helps human soul to achieve union with the Over-Soul. In this view there cannot be anything inconsistent between yoga and business. God is the best businessman. He is the eternal Actor. Nothing in this manifested world is outside Him. According to the Gita, "having created this universe He lives and moves in His creation". If one seeks union with the Great Builder, he has to train himself to be like Him down here. All the slip-shodness which one would expect from the erroneous view of yoga above referred to will disappear. If only we shall do everything as unto Him or to please Him or in a manner which will be, however faintly, similar to how He does things, all our actions down here will be characterized by striking orderliness, remarkable efficiency and amazing enthusiasm. That is why the Lord said in the Gita that Yoga is verily "skill in action".

The first essential thing in Yoga is to recognise that we cannot escape from this world. We have to be here and achieve the highest; and that is certainly possible. People have achieved it in the past, why should we not achieve now? It is not so much the magnitude of the thing that we do that counts, but *how* we do it. It is the attitude of mind which you apply to a piece of work which makes you a Yogi. The Bhagavad Gita is verily a gospel of action. It gives us a code of conduct which takes in its big sweep the extreme other-worldliness of India and the incessant physical activity of the West. A story is told that, when a Sannyasi could not learn his lessons in Yoga, he was directed to learn it from a butcher. A superficial thinker may think that a butcher's shop was the last place to learn Yoga. When Arjuna wanted to know the characteristic attributes of a Yogi, he asked the Lord, "What is he like? How does he speak, how does he sit, how does he walk?" and so on. The inference is obvious. We must be able to recognize a Yogi in all these things.

In India unfortunately the other-worldly tendency has been very strong for a long time. That might have been good once. Those times are past,

"New actions teach new duties;
Time makes ancient good uncouth;
They must upward still and onward,
Who would keep abreast of truth."

(Lowell)

This misguided idea of Yoga has been to some extent responsible for all that we have gone through during the last few centuries.

In the eyes of the Lord the spirit in which we serve counts much more than how the world applaude our action. If we do anything in the proper spirit it will make a beautiful offering to the Lord.

"A servant with his clause
Makes drudgery divine,
Who sweeps a room as for his laws
Makes that small action fine."

A man cannot really do a big thing well who has not trained himself in doing small things well. And so it is best to start doing everything well, as unto the Lord, as an offering worthy to be accepted by the Lord. Inefficiency and carelessness are the greatest obstacles to Yoga.

Now it would be clear how Yoga has a place in business. Yoga itself is a real business. It involves taking oneself in hand seriously. It depends upon sustained, well-planned, one-pointed effort. To whatever matter a Yogi applies himself, he will give his whole mind to it, and will not allow slip-shodness or carelessness to interfere with the performance of his work. If a butcher can be a Yogi, if King Janaka can be a great Yogi (quoted by Sri Krishna as an example), if a paraya labourer like Nanda, a weaver

like Tiruvalluvar, a barber like Sena can achieve perfection, then why not a businessman be a Yogi too? In whatever walk of life we are engaged, we can do our work like a Yogi.

How then to do business as a Yogi? Yoga does not mean that you should give away everything or break all the laws of monetary transaction. It means only that you do things carefully and with a kind and sympathetic attitude. Make sure that you do not waste unnecessarily, that you do not deceive people, but deal fairly with every one who has business relations with you. Perhaps if you bring in the quality of a Yogi into business you will be a more successful businessman. Courtesy, fairplay, efficiency, alertness and method will make for successful business and these are the very essentials which will go to make a Yogi.

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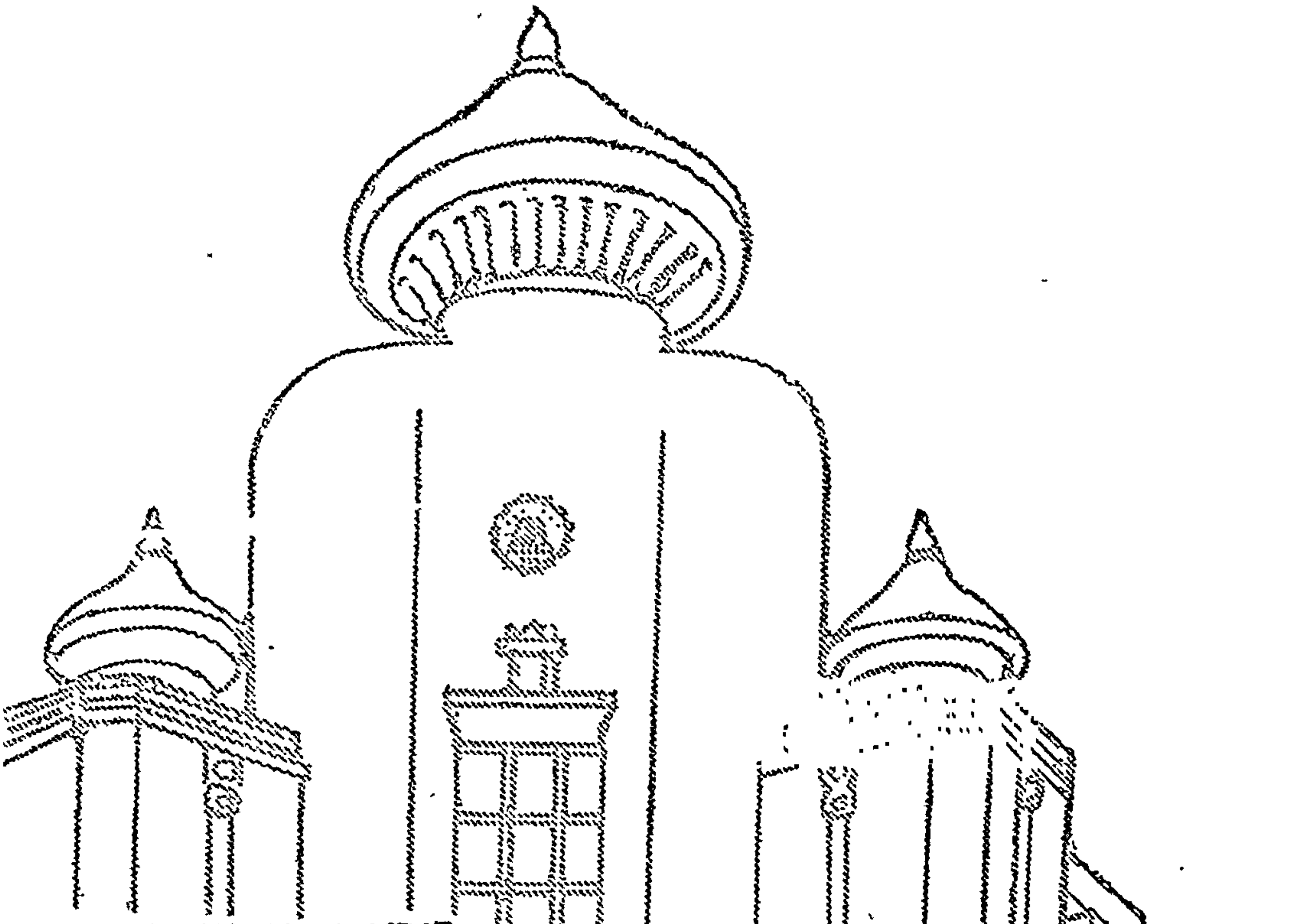
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